

**VOL 1**  
CHAPTERS 1 - 6



# BhagavadGita

demystified  
by  
**NITHYANANDA**

# Bhagavad**Gita** Demystified

*Discourses delivered to Swamis and Ananda Samajis  
of the Nithyananda Order all over the world*

## Bhagavad**Gita** Vol. I Chapters 1-6



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*Dear Reader*

*Our efforts in compiling these volumes have been to get Paramahansa's message to humanity at the earliest so that the people are continued to be helped tremendously through it as early as possible in their lives. Any errors in this book are due to oversight of the compilation team and will be corrected in the next edition. In the event you do encounter errors, it is a humble request to catch the truth instead of the letter and move on. We will be happy if you bring it to our notice.*

**- Publishers**

## TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

>	oṁ	home	>	oṁ	Rome
A	a	fun	Ṭ	ṭa	touch
Am	ā	car	R>	ṭha	ant-hill
B	i	pin	S>	ḍa	duck
B <sup>©</sup>	ī	feen	T>	ḍha	godhook
C	u	put	U	ṇa	thunder
D\$	ū	pool	V	ṭa	(close to) think
F\$	r	rig	W	ṭha	(close to) pathetic
F\$	ṛ	(long r)	X	da	(close to) father
b¥	ḷ	*	Y	dha	(close to) breathe <u>hard</u>
E	c	play	Z	na	numb
Eo	ai	high	n	pa	purse
Am	o	over	\\$	pha	sapphire
Am	au	cow	~	ba	but
A\$	aṁ	**	^	bha	abhor
A...	aḥ	***	_	ma	mother
H\$	ka	kind	`	ya	young
I	kha	blockhead	a	ra	run
J	ga	gate	b	la	luck
K	gha	log-hut	d	va	virtue
L>	ṇa	sing	e	śa	shove
M	ca	chunk	f	ṣa	bushel
N>	cha	match	g	sa	sir
O	ja	jug	h	ha	house
P	jha	hedgehog	ī	(Note 1)	(close to) world
Am	ña	bunch	j	kṣa	worksheet
İ	tra	three	k	jña	*
@		unpronounced (a)	@	“	Unpronounced (ā)

Note 1: “” itself is sometimes used.

\*\* Nasalisation of the preceding vowel.

\* No English Equivalent.

\*\*\* Aspiration of preceding vowel

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# Bhagavad Gita: A Background

Bhagavad Gita is a sacred scripture of the *vedic* culture. As with all scriptures, it was knowledge that was transmitted verbally. It was called *śruti* in Sanskrit, meaning something that is heard.

Gita, as Bhagavad Gita is generally called, translates literally from Sanskrit as 'Sacred Song'. Unlike *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*, which are stand alone expressions, Gita is written into the Hindu epic Mahabharata, called a *purana*, an ancient tale. It is part of a story, so to speak.

As a scripture, Gita is part of the ancient knowledge base of the *vedic* tradition, which is the expression of the experiences of great sages.

*Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*, the foundation of *śruti* literature, arose from the insight and awareness of these great sages when they went into a no-mind state. These are as old as humanity and the first and truest expressions in the journey of man's search for truth.

Unlike *Vedas*, which were revealed to the great sages, or *Upaniṣads*, which were the teachings of these great sages, Gita is part of a story narrated by Vyasa, one of these great sages. It is narrated as the direct expression of the Divine.

No other epic, or part of an epic, has the special status of Gita. As a consequence of the presence of Gita, the Mahabharata epic itself is considered a sacred Hindu scripture. Gita arose from the super-consciousness of Krishna, the supreme god, and is therefore considered a scripture.

Mahabharata, literally meaning the great Bharata, is a narration about the nation and civilization, which is now known as India. It was then a nation ruled by king Bharata and his descendants.

The story of this epic is about two warring clans, Kauravas and Pandavas, closely related to one another. Dhritarashtra, the blind king of Hastinapura and father of the 100 Kaurava brothers was the brother of Pandu, whose children were the five Pandava princes. It is a tale of strife between cousins.

Since Dhritarashtra was blind, Pandu was made the king of Hastinapura. Pandu was cursed by a sage that he would die if he ever entered into a physical relationship with his wives. He therefore had no children. Vyasa says that all the five Pandava children were born to their mothers Kunti and Madri through the blessing of divine beings. Pandu handed over the kingdom and his children to his blind brother Dhritarashtra and retired to meditate in the forest.

Kunti had received a boon when she was still a young unmarried adolescent, that she could summon any divine power at will to father a child. Before she married, she tested her boon. The Sun god Surya appeared before her. Karna was born to her as a result. In fear of social reprisals, she cast the newborn away in a river. Yudhishtira, Bhima, and Arjuna were born to Kunti after her marriage by invocation of her powers, and the twins Nakula and Sahadeva were born to Madri, the second wife of Pandu.

Yudhishtira was born to Kunti as a result of her being blessed by Yama, the god of death and justice, Bhima by Vayu, the god of wind, and Arjuna by Indra, god of all the divine beings. Nakula and Sahadeva, the youngest Pandava twins, were born to Madri, through the divine Ashwini twins.

Dhritarashtra had a hundred sons through his wife Gandhari. The eldest of these Kaurava princes was Duryodhana. Duryodhana felt no love for his five Pandava cousins. He made many unsuccessful attempts, along with his brother Dushshana, to kill the Pandava brothers. Kunti's eldest son Karna, whom she had cast away at birth, was found and brought up by a chariot driver in the palace, and by a strange twist of fate, joined hands with Duryodhana.

Dhritarashtra gave Yudhishtira one half of the Kuru kingdom on his coming of age, since the Pandava prince was the rightful heir to the throne that his father Pandu had vacated. Yudhishtira ruled from his new capital Indraprastha, along with his brothers Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. Arjuna won the hand of princess Draupadi, daughter of the king of Panchala, in a *svayamvara*, a marital contest in which princes fought for the hand of a fair damsel. In fulfilment of their mother Kunti's desire that the brothers share everything equally, Draupadi became the wife of all five Pandava brothers.

Duryodhana persuaded Yudhishtira to join a gambling session, where his cunning uncle Shakuni defeated the Pandava king. Yudhishtira lost all that he owned - his kingdom, his brothers, his wife and himself, to Duryodhana. Dussasana shamed Draupadi in public by trying to disrobe her. The Pandava brothers and Draupadi were forced to go into exile for fourteen years, with the condition that in the last year they should live incognito.

At the end of the fourteen years, the Pandava brothers tried to reclaim their kingdom. In this effort they were helped by Krishna, the king of the Yadava clan, who is considered the eighth divine incarnation of Vishnu. However, Duryodhana refused to yield even a needlepoint of land, and as a result, the Great War, the War of Mahabharata ensued. In this war, various rulers of the entire nation that is modern India aligned with one or the other of these two clans, the Kauravas or the Pandavas.

Krishna offered to join with either of the two clans. He said, 'One of you may have me unarmed. I will not take any part in the battle. The other may have my entire Yadava army.' When the offer was made to Duryodhana, he predictably chose the large and well-armed Yadava army, in preference to the unarmed Krishna. Arjuna joyfully and gratefully chose his friend and mentor Krishna to be his unarmed charioteer!

The armies assembled in the vast field of Kurukshetra, now in the state of Haryana in modern day India. All the kings and princes were related to one another, and were often on opposite sides. Facing the Kaurava army and his friends, relatives and teachers, Arjuna was overcome by remorse and guilt, and wanted to walk away from the battle.

Krishna's dialogue with Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra is the content of Bhagavad Gita. Krishna persuaded Arjuna to take up arms and vanquish his enemies. 'They are already dead,' says Krishna, 'All those who are facing you have been already killed by Me. Go ahead and do what you have to do. That is your duty. Do not worry about the outcome. Leave that to Me.'

Gita is the ultimate practical teaching on the inner science of spirituality. It is not as some scholars incorrectly claim, a promotion of violence. It is about the impermanence of the mind and body, and the need to go beyond the mind, ego and logic.

Being blind, king Dhritarashtra does not participate in the war. His minister Sanjaya uses his powers of clairvoyance to 'see' and relate to king Dhritarashtra the goings on on the battlefield. It is in Sanjaya's voice that we hear Gita, the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.

All the Kaurava princes as well as all their commanders such as Bhishma, Drona and Karna were killed in battle. The five Pandava brothers survived as winners and became the rulers of the combined kingdom.

This dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna is a dialogue between man and God or *nara* and *Narayana* as they are termed in Sanskrit. Arjuna's questions and doubts are those of each one of us. The answers of the Divine, Krishna, transcend time and space. Krishna's message is as valid today as it was on that fateful battlefield some thousands of years ago.

Nithyananda explains the inner metaphorical meaning of Mahabharata thus:

'The Great War of Mahabharata is the fight between the positive and negative thoughts of the mind, called the *saṁskāras*. The positive thoughts are the Pandava princes and the negative thoughts are the Kaurava princes. Kurukshetra or the battlefield is the body. Arjuna is the individual consciousness and Krishna is the enlightened master.

The various commanders who led the Kaurava army represent the major blocks that the individual consciousness faces in its journey to enlightenment. Bhishma, the grand patriarch of the Kuru clan, represents parental and societal conditioning. Drona, the teacher of both the Kauravas and the Pandavas, represents the conditioning from teachers who provide knowledge including spiritual guidance. Karna represents the restrictive influence of good deeds such as charity and compassion, and finally Duryodhana represents the ego, which is the last to fall.

Parental and societal conditioning has to be overcome by rebelling against conventions. This is why, traditionally, those seeking the path of enlightenment are required to renounce the world as *sanyāsin* and move away from civilization. This conditioning does not die as long as the body lives, but its influence drops.

Drona represents all the knowledge one imbibes and the teachers one encounters, who guide us but are unable to take us through to the ultimate flowering of enlightenment. It is difficult to give them up since one feels grateful to them. This is where the enlightened master steps in and guides us.

Karna is the repository of all good deeds and it is his good deeds that stand in the way of his own enlightenment. Krishna has to take the load of Karna's *puṇya*, his meritorious deeds, before he could be liberated. The enlightened master guides one to drop one's attachment to good deeds arising out of what are perceived to be charitable and compassionate intentions. He also shows us that the quest for and the experience of enlightenment is the ultimate act of compassion that one can offer to the world.

Finally one reaches Duryodhana, one's ego, the most difficult to conquer. One needs the full help of the master here. It is subtle work and even the master's help may not be obvious, since at this point, sometimes the ego makes us disconnect from the master as well.

The Great War was between one hundred and eighty million people - one hundred and ten million on the Kaurava side representing our negative *saṁskāras* (stored memories) and seventy million on the Pandava side representing our positive *saṁskāras* and it lasted eighteen days and nights. The number eighteen has a great mystical significance. It essentially signifies our ten senses that are made up of five *jñānendriya* - the senses of perception like taste, sight, smell, hearing and touch, and five *karmendriya* - the senses initiating action like speech, bodily movements, etc., added to our eight kinds of thoughts like lust, greed, etc. All eighteen need to be dropped for Self-realization!

Mahabharata is not just an epic story. It is not merely the fight between good and evil. It is the dissolution of both positive and negative *saṁskāras* that reside in our body-mind system, which must happen for the ultimate liberation. It is a tale of the process of enlightenment.

Mahabharata is a living legend. Bhagavad Gita is the manual for enlightenment.

Like Arjuna many thousand years ago, you are here in a dialogue with a living enlightened master in this book. This is a tremendous opportunity to resolve all questions and clear all doubts with the master's words.





## Introduction

In this series, enlightened master, Paramahansa Nithyananda comments on Bhagavad Gita.

Many hundreds of commentaries on Gita have been written over the years. The earliest commentaries were by the great spiritual masters such as Adi Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and Madhva, some thousand years ago. In recent times, great masters such as Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Ramana Maharshi have spoken from Gita extensively. Many others have written volumes on this great scripture.

Nithyananda's commentary on Bhagavad Gita is not just a literary translation and a simple explanation of that translation. He takes the reader through a world tour while talking about each verse. It is believed that each verse of Gita has seven levels of meaning. What is commonly rendered is the first-level meaning. Here, an enlightened master takes us beyond the common into the uncommon, with equal ease and simplicity.

To read Nithyananda's commentary on Gita is to obtain an insight that is rare. It is not mere reading; it is an experience; it is meditation.

Shankara, the great master and philosopher said:

'A little reading of Gita, a drop of Ganga water to drink, remembering Krishna once in a while, all this will ensure that you have no problems with the god of death.'

Editors of these volumes of Bhagavad Gita have expanded upon the original discourses delivered by Nithyananda through further discussions with Him. For ease of understanding for English speaking readers, and in their academic interest, the original Sanskrit verses and their English translation have been included as an appendix to this book.

This reading is meant to help every individual in daily life as well as in the endeavour to realize the ultimate Truth. It creates every possibility to attain *nityānanda*, eternal bliss!





# BhagavadGita *Śāstras, Stotras, Sūtras*

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## CHAPTER 1

Life will always be a mix of the good and the bad, the Divine and the devil. Choosing one over the other does not help. We need to go beyond both!



- ◆ *Swamiji*, you mentioned that the Mahabharata war is a metaphor. Please elaborate.
- ◆ What is the relationship between enlightenment and personality development?
- ◆ What is needed to go beyond Drona, Karna and finally Duryodhana?
- ◆ How do we differentiate between Drona and Sahadeva?
- ◆ What do Kunti and Draupadi represent?
- ◆ What are the roles of Vidura and Balarama?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you talked about people who are physically blind and people who see yet are still blinded by ignorance. If a great king like Dhritarashtra could be blinded by his love for his son, how can ordinary mortals be any better?
- ◆ Is the Mahabharata war a conflict of egos? If so, is there good ego and bad ego?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, conches, *mantra* and *astra*, all these seem so unreal in this modern age of science and technology. Even the *mālā* (rosary) with your picture worn by your followers seems to build a cult-like environment. I would like to believe, but much that I have learned is contradictory. Please help me understand.
- ◆ You say Gita acquires the authority of the scriptures since it is delivered by Krishna, the perfect incarnation, *pūrṇāvatār*. Other scriptures such as the Veda. were revealed to sages. Is there historical proof that Krishna was God incarnate?

- ◆ *Swamiji*, You explained that Duryodhana acted out of blindness and Arjuna from partial awareness. Yet, if Arjuna were to enter the fight and kill his kinsmen, there would be no difference between him and Duryodhana. You yourself pointed out that rights and wrongs are merely our conditioning. Then in what manner is Arjuna better than Duryodhana?
- ◆ Arjuna was a successful warrior and yet he goes into depression. At least he had a master who could help him. What can others do?
- ◆ You talked about Arjuna's dilemma. Was there really a dilemma? Dilemma is when one has choices. In many ways Arjuna had no choice about fighting his cousins. Wasn't it really fear that caused this confusion?
- ◆ How does an enlightened person react to the physical environment?
- ◆ People wonder whether they need to be qualified to be enlightened. Do they need to do good deeds? Do they need to be scholars? Do they need to belong to a particular caste or creed or religion?
- ◆ How does the tale of a war help us in day-to-day issues? There have been hundreds, if not thousands of wars in the history of mankind, and many have been well documented. These have not stopped other wars. They have not helped mankind learn. How does one expect Bhagavad Gita to transform peoples' attitudes?



## Beyond Scriptures

There are millions of scriptures and millions of books on planet Earth. From time immemorial, human beings have created scriptures and still continue to create spiritual books. But Bhagavad Gita is incomparable. We cannot compare this book with any other because no other book has penetrated human consciousness so deeply. No other book has contributed to the preparation of so many enlightened beings on planet earth like Bhagavad Gita. No other book is a complete encyclopedia of spirituality. Bhagavad Gita is the unabridged dictionary and encyclopedia of spirituality.

Spiritual literature can be classified into three categories. First we have *śāstras*: *śāstras* give us clarity about the aim of life, the goal of human life. They teach us how to live life, the purpose of life, and the goal of life. They give intellectual understanding about the ultimate truth of man and God.

*Śāstras* logically and intellectually answer all major questions. Through them, we can be logically convinced to follow the ultimate path. *Śāstras* guide us in life. These books give us regulations, do's and don't's, what should be done and what should not be done.

There are many examples. The Ten Commandments are *śāstras*. The *śruti* and *smṛti* of Hindu religion, the sacred scriptures such as the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*, and the guidelines such as the Manusmṛiti and epics such as Ramayana, are *śāstras*. The Bible, Koran, Dhammapada of Buddha, Zend Avesta of Zoroaster, and Jewish Kabbalah are *śāstras*.

The second category of literature is *stotras*. It is the expression of someone who has realized the ultimate truth; a person who has had the glimpse of divine love. When such a person expresses his joy, the expression is *stotras*.

When we worship and surrender ourselves to the Divine, the form of expression is *stotras*, devotional compositions. The literature from the heart is *stotras*; literature from the head is *śāstras*.

The third type of literature called *sūtras* gives us techniques to realize the state of uniting with the Divine.

*Śāstras* give us intellectual understanding, *stotras* give emotional feeling, *sūtras* give the being level experience.

*Śāstras* are like signboards, intellectual scriptures that explain the basics of life. *Stotras* help us surrender to the Divine. The glory of the Divine is expounded on by the *stotras*. *Sūtras* give us techniques to achieve devotion or enlightenment.

*Śāstras* alone cannot lead us to enlightenment, although they can be a good support; they can take us to an enlightened master. Until that point, it is a great help. *Stotras* are spoken from the level of emotion, feeling. When we have a deep feeling, we just express it. It just flows through us. Our whole being is flowing; that is *stotras*. *Sūtras* means the technique that helps us achieve the goal of the *śāstras* and the *stotras*.

The goal of *śāstra* is the soul, divinity within; the goal of *stotras* is God. Of course, both are one and the same, but they have two different paths.

People who are intellectually oriented, who are centered in logic, analysis and calculation need *śāstras*, intellectual scriptures. They do not do anything unless they are intellectually convinced, unless they are clear about the whole thing. We cannot say that because of this attitude, they should not seek spirituality. However, there are many scriptures that say, 'Don't come inside if you don't have faith.'

Let me tell you, we should look at man with more compassion. We can't put faith as the main criterion to enter into spirituality. If we put faith as the first criterion, we are refusing to give spirituality to almost 90% of humanity because for most people it is not easy to believe anything immediately. Faith may not be instantaneous.

Words like belief and faith have limited relevance. These words are outdated. They no longer have the meaning they had ages ago. These words are totally out of our lives. We can't say that only the person who believes, the one who has faith, can come for spirituality. Spirituality should be open to every being. We should create a system through which we can reach every individual.

Our *vedic* seers created *śāstras* to give us intellectual understanding. They logically taught us the path and the goal, and why we are asked to do all these things and why we need spirituality. All these major questions are answered logically and intellectually in *śāstras* and the conclusions are given to us.

We need to understand a few things about *śāstras*. *Śāstras* completely take away our doubts. Doubt is a devil. Once a doubt enters our mind, we can't sleep, we can't rest until we clear it. *Śāstras* help us get rid of these doubts intellectually.

One thing we should understand about intellectual clarity is that unless we have complete intellectual clarity, our belief will be a pseudo belief; anyone can shake our faith. Our faith does not have a strong base. Our faith is almost like a building without a foundation. If we build without a foundation, what will happen to the building? It will collapse. The same will happen to us if we don't have the base of *śāstras*.

A person asked the great master Vivekananda, 'Master, what is the importance of *Veda* and why should we study the scriptures?'

Vivekananda said, 'If you study the scriptures, all your faith and sincerity will become so strong that nobody will be able to shake you.'

Otherwise, any fool can tell us that what we are doing is superstitious and we can start thinking, 'Am I really doing superstitious things? Am I really following the right path? What am I doing?' We will start having doubts about ourselves. We won't have faith in ourselves.

Every human being should understand that we don't believe our belief. We may think we believe in something; we may think we have faith, but our faith or belief is not deep enough. It does not take us anywhere unless we have the foundation of intellectual conviction. Unless we have the deep foundation of *śāstras*, we will not be able to believe in anything.

Please be very clear, even our emotions are not so deep. We think we have love, we think we believe. I see all types of people who say they believe in what they think. One man said, 'Oh master, I love the whole world.' Again and again, I tell people that to love the world is easy, but to love your wife is very difficult!

That is why we are stuck. To love the whole world is very easy. We can always say *Vasudaiva Kuṭumbakam* - the world is my family. The problem is that we are not in tune with our own family. We think we love, but we don't really love. Our

emotions are not deep; our faith is not deep. This is because we don't have the intellectual conviction.

If we do not have the intellectual conviction and have only faith, our faith can be shaken by anybody. Just one person is enough to break our faith. We can be totally shaken. *Śāstras*, the intellectual understanding, give a base so that all our convictions, all our faith, all our belief can enter into our being and start working.

*Bhakti*, devotion, is just an alchemy process. It is as if a touchstone has touched us. Ramakrishna says beautifully, 'If a touchstone touches any metal it becomes gold; just a touch of the stone is enough for any metal to be converted into gold.'

Devotion is a touchstone. The moment devotion touches us, we become God, we become divine. The problem is, we never allow devotion to touch us; we never allow devotion to work on us; we never allow devotion to penetrate our being.

We think we want God, but we are continuously afraid of the Divine. We may think we want the Divine, but as long as it is superficial, as long as it is under our control, things go well. The moment the devotion enters our being, and starts the process, we say, 'No, no, not that much. This is enough! I think that is too much for me!'

We stop at a certain point; our faith is pseudo faith.

A small story:

One guy lived throughout his life as an atheist. One day he fell from a cliff and was hanging on to a small branch. Slowly, the branch also started giving way. The man started shouting, 'Oh God! I never believed in you, but now I do. Please save me! Please save me, now that I believe in you.'

A booming voice from heaven said, 'Oh my son, don't worry. I will save you. Just let go of the branch! Let go of the branch and I will save you.'

Immediately the man responded, 'Is there anybody else out there who can save me?'

Our faith is just a show. Is there anybody else who can save me? God is only one of the many choices for us.

If there is no good movie on television, then we go to the temple. If we don't have any other commitment, any other party on a particular day, we go to the temple. God is only one more choice in our lives. Till we have an intellectual conviction about life, God is just one more choice; spirituality is just one more



choice. We just choose. It is just one more shop like Walmart and K Mart; it is Spiritual Mart; we decide which shop we should enter! It is just one more shop, nothing more than that. The basic need for life is intellectual conviction.

A small story:

There was a grandmother in a village. She went to the city to visit her five year old grandson who lived with his parents.

At bed time, she went to her grandson's room to wish him good night. The boy was praying.

She asked him, 'Do you say your prayers every night?' He replied, 'Yes.' She asked, 'And what about morning?' The boy replied, 'No. I am not scared in the daytime.'

This is how our relationship with God is. It is only this much! Our spirituality is just a game. We remember God only when we need something. When things go well according to our chosen route, then God is great, else throw away the God. I have seen people who pass exams and break coconuts as an offering in front of Ganesha temples, but if they fail, they break the Ganesha idol itself!

If they pass in their exams, they break coconuts for Ganesha and if they fail they break Ganesha himself!

Our faith is pseudo if it is not life transforming. We do not allow devotion to work on us. A beautiful verse in the scriptures of *Vedānta* says: To clear your intellect, you must break your intellect; you must open your intellect; you must have a clear intellectual understanding about life, about spirituality, about everything. *Śāstras* give us that intellectual clarity, that intellectual understanding.

All the great devotional people like Chaitanya, Ramanuja and Madhva had a strong intellectual base. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was a great *Nyayaika* philosopher. *Nyayaika* means logic; he was a great philosopher of logic. Once you reach that height, those peaks of logic, only then you fall into the valley of love; only then you are qualified to fall in love. Unless you reach the heights of logic, you are not qualified to fall into the valley of love. All great masters and great devotees who reach the peak of intellect have a strong *śāstras* base.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Ramanuja, Madhva, all these great masters of devotion, had a strong intellectual base in the first category of scriptures, *śāstras*.

Next are the *stotras*. *Stotra* means expressing our experience, love or devotion to our master or God. Expressing our deep love is *stotra*. We stand in front of the Divine, feel the energy of the Lord and express our emotions.

Many people ask, ‘*Swamiji*, why does Hinduism have idol worship?’ Hinduism does not have idol worship. We don’t worship the idol. We worship *through* the idol. When we stand in front of the idol, do we say, ‘Oh stone! Give me a boon. Oh stone! Please save me?’

No! We say, ‘Oh God, please save me.’ We don’t worship the idol. We worship *through* the idol. So we are not doing idol worship. We worship through the idol. In *Vaishnavism*, the devotional stream of Hinduism, there is a beautiful word *arcāvatāra*. This means the idol worshipped in the temple is the incarnation of God.

*Arcāvatāra* means incarnation of God. The idol is not just a stone. Incarnation means the Divine descending on planet earth, just like the ten incarnations of Vishnu. All these idols are like these ten incarnations. Just like these incarnations, the stone, the idol that we worship is called *arcāvatāra*. We relate to the Divine through the idol.

When we stand in front of the idol and pour our heart out through verses, this expression is what is *stotras*. All the songs written by great devotees like the Alvars, Nayanmars, Meera and Chaitanya - are *stotras*.

People ask me, ‘*Swamiji*, sometimes I don’t feel like chanting these *stotras*. Should I do it mechanically even if I don’t like doing it?’

I say, ‘Do it. You may feel it is a mechanical exercise for one or two days. However, it will become your being once you start enjoying the meaning and experiencing what you express. It will become your feeling.’ When you express your heart, it becomes *stotra*.

Next is *sūtras*. *Sūtras* give us the technique to reach enlightenment. *Śāstras* are from the intellectual level. *Stotras* are from the emotional level. *Sūtras* are from the being level.

There are three kinds of human beings: head oriented, heart oriented and being oriented. To fulfil everyone, our enlightened sages have created three kinds of literature - *śāstras*, *stotras* and *sūtras*. Bhagavad Gita is the only book that is a combination of *śāstras*, *stotras* and *sūtras*! In Bhagavad Gita, all three are combined together, with something more!

Gita is *śāstras*; it gives a clear intellectual understanding about life, soul, as well as the do’s and don’ts, rules and regulations. I have not seen any other book explain these concepts so deeply.

Just explaining do's and don'ts will not help. Giving the intellectual reason as to why it should be done or not done is necessary. Many books talk about how many times you can marry or whether you can marry at all. Many books lay down all these rules, but give no explanation. Very few books give reasons why we should or should not do something. Gita is the only book I know that gives a strong intellectual base, intellectual clarity and understanding about what we should do.

No other religion has as many scriptures as Hinduism. Within the *vedic* literature, our masters have chosen three books called '*prasthānatraya*'. These books are the ultimate authorities in spirituality. One is the Brahma Sutra, the second is *Upaniṣads* and the third is the Bhagavad Gita.

Veda Vyasa, an enlightened master, wrote the Brahma Sutra. Many enlightened masters taught what is known as *Upaniṣad*. However, Gita is directly from God, from a *pūrṇāvatār* - a perfect incarnation, Krishna. Among the incarnations, Krishna is considered *pūrṇā*, complete, a full incarnation.

Why is Krishna considered the only perfect incarnation? Why can't he be just one more incarnation? First understand why incarnations come to planet earth.

Ramakrishna recounts beautifully: There was a beautiful paradise with many trees and varieties of flowers and fruits. Three friends were walking near this paradise that had a big wall around it. One of them climbed the wall and peeped inside.

He cried out, 'Oh my God! Such a beautiful place!' He jumped into the garden and started enjoying the fruits. The second man climbed the wall and saw the garden. He too felt it was beautiful, but he had a little bit of courtesy. He turned and said to the third man who was below, 'Dear friend, there is a beautiful paradise below. Come, I am going in.' Saying this, he jumped over and started enjoying the fruits.

The third man climbed the wall and saw the paradise. He saw his two friends and understood the level of joy and bliss that they were enjoying. Then he said to himself, 'Let me go down and tell all the people about this beautiful paradise. I will bring them all to enjoy this garden.'

An incarnation is someone who comes down to tell others about the blissful place that he experienced. The man who descends from the Divine to express the bliss of that divinity is an incarnation. The person who returns to planet earth to

tell you about divinity and to make you realize what he has experienced, is an incarnation.

A scientist is a person who creates a formula to understand things of the outer world. For example, Newton saw the apple falling from the tree. Suddenly some understanding came to him, 'Why is this falling? What is happening? Why shouldn't it go up? Why is it coming down?' Newton glimpsed the truth at that moment. He analyzed and created a formula so that everybody could understand what happens when an objects fall. Newton created a formula, the theory of gravity. A scientist is a person who creates a formula for the outer world.

In the same way, an enlightened spiritual master is a person who creates a formula to reproduce his inner world experiences. Scientists create formulae for the outer world, whereas a master creates a formula to recreate the experience of the inner world. Meditation techniques are these formulae.

An incarnation is a person who can directly give the experience without even using the formula! All these great incarnations come down to planet earth to make people realize that they too are divine, that they too are God, to tell people that the other side is beautiful. 'There's a very big paradise. Come, let us go and enjoy. Come, join me,' they say.

An incarnation is a person who has descended to teach divinity to the world. Why is Krishna a perfect incarnation? He has all the qualities needed to push human beings to divinity. The person who can push human beings to divinity is called *jagat guru* – the guru who awakens. He is the teacher, the master of the whole universe.

The invocation verse of Bhagavad Gita says:

*Vasudeva sutaṁ devaṁ kamsa cāṇūra mardanaṁ ।  
Devakī paramānandaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ vande jagad guruṁ ॥*

*I salute you Lord Krishna, teacher of the world,  
son of Vasudeva and  
supreme bliss of Devaki, destroyer of Kamsa and Chanura.*

The verse says that Krishna is the *jagat guru*. *Jagat guru* is a person who can help the whole world, all types of human beings at all levels. The universe is a place with all types of human beings who are at all levels of experience and maturity. Krishna can help people from all levels to experience divinity, to reach the ultimate, to realize the truth.

There are intellectual people, emotional people and people at the being level. Some incarnations, such as Shankara, strongly appeal to intellectual people. Shankara suits intellectual people. Buddha suits intellectual people. Intellectual people can easily relate to Buddha, but it is difficult for emotional people to relate to Him. We can't imagine Buddha with a flute! We can't imagine Buddha singing and dancing. We can't imagine Shankara singing and dancing. We can't imagine Shankara doing *rās-līla*!

Buddha and Shankara will appeal only to the intellectuals.

There are some incarnations for emotional people. Emotional people relate to Meera and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who are always singing, dancing and celebrating. An intellectual man can never understand Meera or Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He can never understand Aandal, another great devotional type of person. He can see them dancing, but he cannot see for whom they are dancing. They can never understand these incarnations.

People who are at the being level, centered on their being, find it difficult to relate with intellectual or emotional masters. They straightaway want the experience. They are neither ready to analyze nor ready to believe. A person ready to analyze goes to *shāstras*. A person ready to believe is drawn to *stotras*, but a person who wants a straight experience, instant coffee, instant experience, can neither wait for *shāstras* nor *stotras*. He straightaway wants the technology, the applied science. *shāstras* are like the main theory, the basic science. *Stotras* are like the marketing department, publicity. *Sūtras* are applied science. They give straight answers.

You need to understand a bit about this marketing department.

A small story:

One man died and reached Yamadharma's court for judgment. Yama is the God of death and justice. Yama said, 'You have committed some sins and you also have some merit. You are allowed to be in heaven and in hell. You have a choice. You can see both the places and choose which one you want.'

The man said, 'Alright, I will check out both places and then decide.'

He went to hell first. The people were so beautiful, dancing and singing. It had become completely hi-tech. Computers were available. Internet was available. They watched the news everyday. Everything was so new, air-conditioned, and people were serving so many types of food. He wondered,

‘What is this? What happened to hell?’

People in hell said, ‘All the technical experts are here. So we changed the whole setup. Now we have updated the whole system. It is no more like old times. Now, everything is new.’

Then the man said, ‘Alright, let me go and see heaven. There is a chance that some techies would have gone there as well. There is a possibility.’

In heaven, he saw the same old saints with long beards, sitting on clouds and singing! Nothing else; nothing new. It was the same old heaven, nothing much was happening.

He went to Yama and said, ‘I think I will go to hell.’

Yama said, ‘Please be certain. You cannot change your mind. Are you sure?’

The man said, ‘Yes, I will go to hell. It’s so cool!’

As soon as he decided, a door suddenly opened and he fell into hell. He was shocked! There was the conventional hell - people being tortured by devils. It was the traditional hell. He asked, ‘What is happening? What is this? When I came half an hour ago, hell was different. Now the whole thing has changed.’

They all gathered around him and one of them said, ‘No, no, that was the promotional feature from our marketing department!’

Be very clear, sometimes we are caught in the marketing department. Don’t be caught in the marketing department, and when you do go to the marketing department, be clear about what the truth is and what exaggeration is. You need to analyze. Of course, when I say we go through the *stotras*, we need to understand it. Please be very clear, when we go through the *purānas*, the epic stories, we need to understand the spirit of the *purānas*.

There is a big difference between fact and truth. *Purānas*, our epics, are truths. They are showing us, leading us to the truth. So while understanding *stotras* we should understand the spirit of the *stotras*.

The next level people, the being-level people, neither want *shāstras* nor *stotras*; they straightaway want the applied science, technology. For them Shiva, who created the Vijñāna Bhairava Tantra, is the answer. All the great meditation techniques he delivered are for those people who are being-oriented. Zen masters are ideal for these kind of people. They will be able to relate well with Zen masters. For the intellectual crowd, there is one kind of incarnation, for the emotional crowd, there is another kind of incarnation, and for being-level people, yet another kind of incarnation.

But Krishna can relate to people at all three levels. If you are intellectual, He gives you the Gita; he is Gita Krishna. If you are emotional, you can have Radha Krishna, the beloved of Radha! He can sing and dance; he can play; he can be naughty; he can fulfil your emotional being; he can give you the ultimate emotional fulfilment. At the being level, you straightaway want the technology of enlightenment. Again, He offers the truth, *Dhyāna Yoga* – the path of meditation techniques – in the Gita.

Krishna is complete fulfilment. His very life is a technique! The very life of Krishna is a technique that leads you to enlightenment. The body language of an enlightened person is a *sūtra*, a technique. Krishna is the person whose body language straightaway leads you to enlightenment. Understand that Rama will lead you to *dharma*, righteousness. If you follow what Rama did, you will have *dharma*, but with Krishna, you will straightaway have *mokṣa*, liberation!

When we experience the being of Krishna, when we understand Krishna, His very being is a technique. His very life is a technique. That is why there is a word in the Bhāgavatam (ancient Indian epic) called '*līla dhyāna*'. Just remembering the *līla*, the playful pranks of Krishna, is *dhyāna*, meditation.

No other incarnation is given the word *līla dhyāna*. No other incarnation is praised like this. Just remembering His acts is meditation!

The great sages were once disturbed by the singing and dancing of the *gopikās* (cowgirls who were Krishna's playmates). So they went to Krishna's birthplace, Vrindavan, to see what was happening. They just wanted to see for themselves.

They thought, 'Why are the *gopikās* so happy and always singing and dancing? We sages are sitting with closed eyes trying to meditate with long faces and nothing is happening. We have been meditating for a long time, but these *gopikās* are always happily singing and dancing! What is really happening in that place?'

A small story within this story:

A man was sitting on the riverbank trying to meditate. He heard the sound of anklets. He opened his eyes and saw a young woman walking towards the river to fetch some water. He asked, 'What is this? What kind of disturbance is this?' Then he closed his eyes and started meditating again.

The next day, at the same time, he heard the sound. Unconsciously he opened his eyes, saw the girl, and asked her, 'What kind of disturbance are you creating?' Again, he closed his eyes and started meditating.

On the third day, he became anxious when the exact time came, and started waiting for the sound of the anklets!

Back to the story, the singing and dancing of the *gopikās* around Krishna disturbed these sages. They wanted to know what was going on in Vrindavan. They came down to see the *gopikās*, but the *gopikās* did not receive them properly, nor did they care to listen to what the sages had to say. They were happy, completely fulfilled, and in total contentment in their reminiscences with Krishna.

The sages asked, 'What is this? We are great sages. We have come all the way to see you and you are not even receiving us properly.'

One *gopikā* asked, 'Sages? Who are they?'

'We meditate on His feet in our heart,' explained one of the sages.

The *gopikā* said, 'Meditate on His feet? Come, we will show you. We are playing with His entire form! You are meditating on Him. Why? Come, we will show you how we are playing with Him. You say you are trying to remember Him. We are trying to forget Him! He is so much in our being. We are unable to forget Him. We are unable to do our work. He has completely filled up our inner space!'

Many people ask, '*Swamiji*, should we remember you? Should we take you as our master?'

I tell them, 'Never make that mistake. If I am going to help you, if I am your master, you will not be able to forget me! That is the real scale to know if I am your master or not.'

If you must remember me with effort, then I am not your master. Forget me. Carry on doing your work. Carry on with your life. If you must remember something consciously, with effort, it is ugly. Only when you can't forget, only then, devotion happens in you. These *gopikās* say, 'We are unable to forget Him.'

Krishna appeals to the being level people. They are continually aspiring, seeking an experience straightaway. Just by His will, He can give that experience to them. He can give experience of enlightenment to Arjuna, by just showing him His cosmic form, *Viśvarūpa darśan*!



Krishna shows that He is in everybody, that everybody is in Him. Just by will, Krishna is able to give an experience of the Divine, eternal bliss, to Arjuna. Whether we are intellectually oriented, emotionally oriented or being level oriented, we can find our fulfilment in Krishna.

Krishna can give us fulfilment. When intellect ripens, it becomes intelligence; when emotion ripens, it becomes devotion; when our being ripens, we become enlightened.

All these three enlightenment modes - being, devotion and intelligence - express at their peak in Krishna. Hence, Krishna can fulfil every being. That is why He is called *jagat guru*, master of the whole universe.

One man in India said to me, 'I am a *jagat guru*.'

I was surprised! I wondered, 'What is this? It is like having a small hotel on the roadside and naming it the Sheraton!'

I asked him, '*Jagat guru*? What do you mean by that word? Do you know the qualifications of a *jagat guru*?'

He said, 'I have one disciple and his name is Jagat. I am his guru!'

So understand: *Jagat guru* does not mean just the *guru* of one person Jagat. *Jagat guru* leads the whole universe into the divine consciousness!

Krishna is a *Jagat guru*.

To a person who is intellectually oriented, the *Upaniṣads* will appeal; the *śāstras* will appeal; the Brahma Sutra will appeal.

To a person who is emotionally oriented, the *stotras* will appeal. The songs of Chaitanya, Meera and Tulsidas will appeal.

For a person who is being-oriented, the Vignana Bhairava Tantra or Patanjali Yoga sutra will appeal.

Krishna appeals to every being.

He is for the intellectual people, the emotional people, the being level people, and something more. He has created keys to open all the locks. He has created methods to give the spiritual experience to the whole of humanity, to people who have come, people who are here, and those yet to come. He has created the technology even for the future generations. He is *nitya ānanda* – eternal bliss. Gita is the ultimate scripture - *śāstra*, *jagat guru* and *sūtra*.

Krishna is beyond scriptures.

When Krishna says,

‘Weapons do not cleave, nor fire burns the Atman

Water does not wet it and wind does not dry it’

When He talks about the basic truths of life and spirituality, it is *śāstra*. He is giving intellectual knowledge.

When Arjuna says,

‘Oh Lord, I bow down to you from the front, from behind, from all sides;

You are infinitely mighty, pervading everything, you are the Ultimate’

Arjuna is doing the *stotra*. Arjuna is praising the lord; he is expressing his devotion.

When Krishna says,

‘Whatever your thought is when you leave this body, absorbed in that thought, that alone you attain, Arjuna!’

Here Krishna provides Arjuna the technique, the most powerful *sūtra* that helps anyone attain what he wants to.

Bhagavad Gita is the only scripture that combines the wisdom of *śāstras*, the depth of feeling of *stotras* and the practical reality of *sūtras*. It is a means to enlightenment for all, delivered by the master of masters.

In this first chapter of Bhagavad Gita, we see Arjuna, the most courageous fighter amongst the Pandava princes and the darling of all his teachers, winner of Draupadi and the close friend of Krishna, in deep dilemma.

Years ago, a man called Arthur Koestler wrote an article about Communism titled ‘Yogi and the Commissar.’ We do not know whether he had read the Gita, but he had certainly captured Arjuna and his plight with his title.

Arjuna is both the *yogi* and the commissar. As a *yogi*, he is deeply spiritual, centered within himself, and deeply aware of his moral and ethical obligations. As the commissar, Arjuna is the warrior, ready to avenge, ready to impose order and control; he is the typical *kṣatriya* prince.

Only with enlightenment is it possible to continuously and consistently proceed with both these personalities without faltering. Arjuna falters as he faces his enemies on the battlefield of the great Mahabharata War. His dilemma unfolds.

Arjuna's dilemma is such that he is now able to be neither a *yogi* nor a Commissar.

He loses his detachment as a *yogi*. In turn, he loses his courage as a commissar.

He sees his enemies and identifies himself with them. In front of him are his mentors, family and friends. They are his extension, his lineage and his identity. He can no longer pretend that he is the ultimate warrior, the commissar, who can dispassionately dispatch them to death.

Arjuna's dilemma is the dilemma of humanity. It is an internal conflict between what we perceive as our value systems and beliefs, and what we feel we can actually do. Our value systems and beliefs are the *saṁskāras* that drive our decisions. The problem lies in the fact that these *saṁskāras* lie deep in our unconscious zone. We are not even aware of them.

Arjuna understood his *kṣatriya* code of conduct very well. This code demanded that he cannot turn down a righteous challenge to fight and gamble. However, his deep-rooted attachment to his clan and lineage proved stronger than what he considered to be his duties. These feelings were far stronger than code of his conduct.

Arjuna's *saṁskāras* were primal. They related to survival issues, identity issues. By his killing clan members, he was in effect destroying a part of himself. No code of conduct was worth that destruction. That was his dilemma.

Each of us is caught in such a dilemma at one time or the other. We are taught to follow certain societal rules and regulations. As long as our basic desires are in tune with these societal and religious rules and regulations, we have no problems, no confusion, and no dilemma. However, our dilemmas start when what we seek and the path we need to follow to achieve them, violate these rules and regulations.

Everyone, without exception, has inbuilt guilt for violating the commandments of religion and society. That is why Jesus said, 'He amongst you, he who is without sin, let him cast the first stone.' That guilt is sin. And we fear that unknown and unseen forces will rise against us to punish us for these violations. Desire versus guilt is our dilemma, always.

In almost all cases, if the desires are strong enough, desires win. Rules and regulations can wait, we say. Worst come worse, we can always work out some means of appeasing these godly forces. We think, after all, what are temples and priests for?

The truth is that society and religion encourage us to think this way. They know that no one can be controlled one hundred percent.

‘Let us just put on speed breakers,’ they say. ‘Let us control them through fear and greed. If they are good all the time, that would be difficult. We shall be out of business. They can then deal directly with the unseen forces. That cannot be allowed. So let us install rules and regulations that cannot be observed by most of them. People will violate them; they will stumble. Let us then catch them and control them through the fear of God.’

Such is the genesis of religious guidelines and societal regulations. Some religions are based only on such guidelines, without any intelligent and acceptable reasoning to support the regulations. It is almost as though they are established so that we break them and feel guilty. Once we feel guilty, we are caught.

In the spiritual sense, there is no such thing as sin. There is nothing that is totally good or bad. As the Tao religion says, good is mixed with bad; there can be no light without darkness, or good without evil. When you become truly aware, you realize that there are no sins.

Whatever happens to us happens as a result of natural laws. The realized ones flow with that realization. When one has compassion for humanity, when one feels for every living being the same compassion that one feels for oneself, one can do no harm to another. There can be no sin. And therefore, there is no guilt either.

Arjuna’s progress on this path of self-discovery is the path of Bhagavad Gita. That can also be our path if we internalize the message of the Gita. When there is no variation between what we wish to do and what we believe in, when we are aware of our *saṁskāras* and we act in total fulfilment and awareness of these *saṁskāras*, we have no dilemma. We are in fulfilment.

All of us are born with pre-existing desires; these are the *vāsanās*, the mental setup that the spirit within us enters into our bodies with each new birth. These are also called *prārabdha karma* (for detailed explanation, please refer *karma* diagrams), those desires that we choose to fulfill when we take birth. They carry their own energy for fulfillment in that lifetime.

The trouble is that the time between death and the next birth is quick and painful. The body-mind system lapses into unconsciousness, a coma, as the energy leaves matter (the body). As the energy enters another piece of matter, another body-mind, the memory of the *prārabdha karma* is erased. When the spirit passes through the causal energy layer as it crosses the seven mind-body energy layers at death, we lose memory of our unfulfilled desires of that birth, the last thoughts, the *vāsanās* and the *prārabdha karma*. Therefore, when we are reborn in another body, we no longer remember why we were born or with what desires and purpose we have chosen this birth!

This is the root cause of our dilemma.

Incarnations and enlightened beings choose a conscious birth with full awareness of their reason for birth. They know what they are here for. They have no confusion, no dilemma. Arjuna is not at that stage, nor are most of us.

Fortunately, it is possible to become aware of our *prārabdha karma*, our opening balance of desires. We can then work towards their fulfillment during each life without accumulating more *karma* (*āgāmya karma*) in this lifetime. *Āgāmya karma* is the 'current account' of desires that we accumulate this lifetime.

By exhausting the *prārabdha* that we brought with us and by not accumulating more *āgāmya*, we reduce the overall 'account' of total *karmas* that we collect over millions of births. This total account is called *sañcita karma*.

These *karmas* or unfulfilled desires are also referred to as *saṁskāras*, the engraved memories stored in our unconscious zone, stirring up these desires. They are also called *vāsanās* or mindset, which in turn create the desires and store them as memories. These three words can be used interchangeably for all practical purposes, although they do have separate deeper meanings.

By understanding the nature and types of *saṁskāras*, *vāsanās* and *karmas* that we carry over into this birth, we can work towards their fulfillment. Then, our stock of *saṁskāras* diminishes.

The Ananda Purana and Nithyananda Purana Programs, the Life Bliss Level 1 and Level 2 courses, address these *karmas*. In both workshops, participants learn about their *saṁskāras*, what motivates their behavior and how to dissolve these *karmas*. In a sense, we begin to understand our opening balance of desires in this life, the *karma* we accumulate during this lifetime and how to work upon and release them while alive.

This is also the process of yoga that Krishna takes Arjuna through in these eighteen chapters of Bhagavad Gita. These teachings are not meant for Arjuna alone. They are meant for us, so that we dissolve our *saṁskāras*, resolve our dilemmas and experience the ultimate truth.

**Q: Swamiji, you mentioned that the Mahabharata war is a metaphor. Please elaborate.**

If you know the story, I can elaborate on the metaphor. Since many may not have read this epic in detail, let me cover only a few important points.

The Mahabharata war lasted eighteen days. Bhagavad Gita was delivered as eighteen chapters. In the war there were totally eighteen *akśouhinis* or divisions. The number eighteen is a mystical number. Now let me give you the theory of counting numbers. The more numbers you have started counting, the deeper the vengeance or logic which has developed in your system.

In ancient times, which we call the age of truth or *Satya Yuga*, people were able to count only till number three. In the following age of *Treta Yuga*, people were able to count up to seven. In the period that followed, *Dvāpara Yuga*, people were able to count upto eight. When people started counting till nine, it was the age of strife, *Kali Yuga*, which we live in today! Keeping account of more than eight thoughts in your memory space creates discomfort.

The ability to count more means that logic is able to advance step-by-step and more thoughts are able to flow. If eight thoughts can flow from you towards the outer world without any break, then you are materialistic; you are focused on the external world, the periphery.

Understand that if you are able to produce eight continuous thoughts without your being reminded to move inwards, it means that you are materially focused, and this leads you to depression. You will be in depression. The ability to have eight continuous thoughts without having self-recovery, without self-healing thoughts intervening to remind you of your true nature, is the pathway to hell.

Whenever your ten senses, which are your gateways to the external world, are added to the eight thoughts, you are in depression and you are in difficulty.

See, as long as you don't add thoughts to your hardware, your senses, you are okay. You don't have only five senses as you think. You have ten senses. There are five senses of perception called *jnānendriya*, and five senses of action called *karmendriya*. Your tongue when it engages in talk is being a *karmendriya*; when it does the act of tasting, it is a *jnānendriya*.

There are five input and five output senses, totally ten senses. When your ten senses are added to your mind, which can count to eight, you are in depression. Either you should not be able to count to eight or all ten senses should not be active. If both are happening you are in deep trouble.

All ten senses are not active in some animals; they are saved. If your ten senses are active and you can count to eight, you are depressed. That is why the number eighteen plays a major role.

What happens when your mind can count to eight, when it can continuously have eight externally focused thoughts? When the mind touches the eyes, it creates millions of thoughts related to the eyes. When it touches the nose, it creates millions of thoughts based on the nose. When it touches the tongue, it creates millions of thoughts related to the tongue. You are overwhelmed by thoughts, and actions driven through these thoughts.

In the Mahabharata War, there were eighteen divisions called *akṣouhiṇis*, which consisted of soldiers, elephants, horses and so on. Of these the Kaurava army had eleven and the Pandava army had seven divisions. Put together, these symbolically represent eighteen million thoughts. When thoughts are high, the larger number of thoughts will be depression oriented. So, eleven million joined the negative group – the Kauravas, and only seven million were self-healing thoughts, self-recovery thoughts belonging to the Pandavas.

Let me give a description of destructive thoughts and self-healing thoughts.

You receive a message that a thief entered your home and took your money and valuables. Now this is a loss. The moment you hear this you think, 'Oh God, what will happen to me? Everything is lost; nothing is there.' All kinds of depressive thoughts are generated. A depressive thought trend starts.

On the other hand, you can choose to respond with self-healing thoughts also. For example, you may think, 'Alright, even if I lose that money, it does not matter, I can always earn more. Even if I have ten times more wealth, what is the point? I am going to leave all that one day and die.'

The person who has renounced everything enjoys everything! Understand that.

Such thoughts are self-healing thoughts. You should have had some click with these self-healing thoughts, by listening to a master or by contemplating and experiencing it yourself. There should have been an inner change, a cognitive shift, a transformation, a psychological revolution; these are what I mean by 'clicks'.

The sudden and bright thoughts that you had when you heard a living master talk, are clicks. You were actually initiated when you got the click. You would have suddenly felt, 'Yes, what He says is right!' Or you yourself might have contemplated and got initiated, become self-illuminated. An inner voice would have said, 'Yes, right!' Those thoughts are self-healing thoughts.

So in the Mahabharata, the self-healing thoughts are seven million and the destructive thoughts are eleven million, and the fight starts!

Arjuna is the individual consciousness; he is oscillating between what he sees as good and what he sees as bad. Your laziness to fight with the negative thoughts is *tamas*, inaction. You justify yourself and say, 'What is the need to fight with all these negative thoughts? It is okay, let them rule.' Your body is the land for which the eleven million and seven million are fighting. This is symbolised by Arjuna's hesitation to fight in the war.

There were one hundred Kaurava brothers: one hundred negative entities. One hundred brothers mean the cloning of one main thought into one hundred parts. Yes, it was cloning; the first cloning on planet earth was that of the Kauravas!

Who are the five Pandavas? They are the sons of Nature, born of immaculate conception: Yudhishtira from Yama, god of death and justice; Arjuna from Indra, god of the heavenly beings; Bhima from Vayu, god of wind; and the twins Nakula and Sahadeva, from the Ashwini putras, divine beings. All the Pandavas are sons of Nature!

The sons of Nature will always be self-healing thoughts, and the cloning of negative thoughts will always be depressing and destructive.

Among the Kauravas, Duryodhana is possessiveness. Shakuni, Duryodhana's uncle, is the energy that fans possessiveness and exploits it. Shakuni is cunningness. They gather together with the help of eleven million self-destructive thoughts (their army). The problem is that Arjuna, the individual consciousness, at the time of fighting the negative thoughts, goes into depression. He says, 'God! I have done so many sins and I have so many negative thoughts. When will I conquer and exhaust them?'



That is when a master, a Krishna, is needed to say, 'Don't bother. These thoughts do not have life. They are all unconnected, random, illogical and meaningless words.' Your negative thoughts do not have power over you once you understand that they are meaningless and unconnected. Once you distance yourself from them, once you unclutch from them, they become powerless!

This is the truth you need to learn. This is the essence of the Gita. If you have done the Nithyanandam course and know the Mahabharata story, you can understand the whole scene. On one side, there are eleven million negative thoughts. Naturally when an individual consciousness sees eleven million negative thoughts, he thinks, 'How can I ever become enlightened? When and how will I get all these guys out of me? And what is the need anyway? After all I am a householder. It's okay. Let them be there as they are. I have responsibilities; I have duties. Why should I kill all these thoughts? I cannot leave my people. I cannot give up my possessions.' You are simply unable to muster the courage. Not only that, you will ascribe your cowardice as a commitment to your parents or family! That is the cunningness!

See, a real commitment will never have a contradiction or conflict. But whenever a master tells you to do something and you say you have a commitment, you are simply justifying your laziness. It is purely because of your laziness and inaction that you justify it. You are in the same place as Arjuna is before the war. That is why the first chapter of Gita is called '*Arjuna viṣāda yoga*,' Arjuna's depression.

The arrows that Arjuna releases when he follows Krishna's advice are thoughts he is unclutching from and disengaging from. Every time you unclutch from a thought, you have released one arrow! One thought has left you! One guy is down!

Arjuna justifies his cowardice as compassion. He expresses his cowardice as compassion. He falls into depression and confusion. When you are depressed, you say, 'No, this is not possible; why should I then act?' That is the time you need the master who will tell you, 'No, it is possible. You must finish it off!'

Why are Bhishma and Drona, the great teachers and elders on the negative side of the war? This is important to understand. Sometimes some self-healing thoughts get surrounded by negative thoughts and support negative thoughts.

Let me give some examples, though some of them may hurt some of your feelings.

Some techniques would have helped you grow in the past. However, they will not be helping you grow anymore. When such techniques continue to influence you,

you need to fight them. They are the Bhishmas and Dronas who stand as part of the negative thoughts in the war.

For example, you are with a guru, and you practice some techniques or follow some system of belief with him. After some time, the guru's teaching does not help you grow further. But just because he did something good for you in the past, you stick to him. You are unable to go or grow beyond him. Such attitudes or thoughts are the Bhishmas and Dronas. They are just as dangerous as Duryodhana and Dusshasana!

Understand: They are as dangerous as Duryodhana and Dusshasana.

Who is Bhishma? He is the embodiment of your parents and elders. He symbolizes all your past conditioning, your parental conditioning. The moment you try to unclutch from your mind, the first one who comes up is Bhishma. He is your conditioning; he is your embedded memory bank. He is Bhishma *Pitāmaha*, the great father; he stands up in front of you first. That is why Bhishma came to the war first, with his big, fresh, eleven million strong army: eleven million thoughts!

So Bhishma is your parental conditioning and the societal conditioning from a young age. He is whatever you respect as your elders. You need to overcome him in your journey of enlightenment!

After parental conditioning comes the person who gave you the spiritual fire. Whoever it was who raised your frequency by a few levels, will come. Who is Drona? Drona taught Arjuna the art of archery. He was the initial level guru who gave Arjuna the inspiration. Drona taught logic and spiritual enquiry to Arjuna. All the intellectual material that you have read so far that keeps you away from an enlightened master, is what Drona stands for. After some time, he himself may become the obstruction to your growth. When Arjuna is with the ultimate master, Krishna, even this initial level guru is an enemy. He is just as dangerous as Shakuni and Duryodhana. He is equally dangerous!

After Drona, your charitable attitude will surface and stand as your enemy in your progress. This is Karna. Who is Karna? He is the embodiment of charity. There are people who are caught in creating wealth just to do charity. Understand that this is also an undesirable attitude. Many people think, 'I will make money and do charity.' Understand, they are caught in the disguise of charity! They will never become enlightened! They need to move beyond their so-called idea of charity, only then will they attain enlightenment.

You can be a Karna and feel good, but that does not mean you will become enlightened. No! However, if in the last few moments of your life, you give away something to an enlightened master, like Karna who handed everything over to Krishna, then there is a possibility of enlightenment for you.

What does this mean? The master takes away all your possessions and attachments. Krishna did not become rich by taking things from Karna. Understand this very clearly. Can you say Krishna became rich by taking things from Karna? No! The master accepting something from you is not for him to become rich, but to liberate *you* from something in which you are caught.

Karna was not able to die. The god of death who is also the god of justice was not allowing him to die because of the merits he had obtained and carried on account of his charity. That was why Krishna was unable to liberate Karna until He said, 'Give me all your good deeds.' Karna gave away all the merits to Krishna and became liberated that very moment.

That is why we call it Karna *mokṣa*, not Karna *vadha*: Karna's liberation, not Karna's destruction. For the evil ones like Kamsa, it is Kamsa *vadha*, destruction; but for Karna, it is Karna *mokṣa*, liberation, because he was stuck in compassion not in anything demonic.

Once you surpass Karna or compassion, your unguarded and pure ego will come and stand for the final fight: symbolized by Duryodhana in the war. And of course, Krishna plays the master game and slays Duryodhana as well.

Only after all these traits in you are gone, will you see enlightenment. Both positivity and negativity must die before enlightenment. The mind load has to reduce and thoughts have to reduce to zero. That is the way the Mahabharata unravels. That is the way the whole Mahabharata opens up.

Your negative thoughts never oppose you directly. They never come and stand in front of you without a positive front. They can never justify themselves as they are. They need a positive front to impose themselves upon you. The eleven million depressive thoughts will not attack you without the support of a Bhishma, Drona or Karna. These three are the positive fronts - parental conditioning, your teacher and your compassion.

So beware of the Bhishmas, Dronas and Karnas. If you overcome them, you are enlightened! If you are hypnotized, or lose confidence seeing them, you are lost. You are Arjuna, gone into depression!

Now, who are Arjuna's assistants in the war? Yudhishtira, or *dharma*, signifies morality. Even while you are unclutching, you must have morality as the base. Just because you are unclutching, you should not start womanizing or using drugs! You will tend to think, 'After all I am unclutched, let me start doing these things.' No! That will not work. *Dharma* must be the base.

The next assistant is Bhima, courage. The courage of the individual consciousness is Bhima. Unclutch with strength and courage. Decide, 'Whatever happens, I am going to unclutch. I may have knee pain, I may have back pain, I may have any pain, still I will unclutch.' And what is unclutching? It is Arjuna wielding the arrow to slay the negative thoughts. That courage is Bhima.

Who is Sahadeva, the other support for Arjuna? Sahadeva is the knowledge of enlightened masters gained by reading books and biographies of enlightened masters. Sahadeva gives you tips from enlightened masters. Sahadeva is the embodiment of your knowledge. Sahadeva's brother is Nakula. Nakula is the science of keeping your body strong till you become enlightened. So there is a need for maintenance of health through yoga and various techniques till you become enlightened.

These are all the ones you need as assistants! Above all of them is the person driving your chariot – your friend, philosopher, guide and master, Krishna!

Now, when you start the war, eleven million are standing in front of you. All the conditioning, teachers, parents and elders are standing in front of you. Those who were teaching you what you should and should not do from day one are standing in front of you. Who else is standing? The person who gave you spiritual inspiration in your life is there. Third, all your charitable attitudes are standing in front of you. What will you do now? Not only that, Shakuni, Duryodhana and all the negative persons are hiding behind these persons as well; they are not in the forefront. They confront through positivism so you may be put into illusion.

Now the war starts and you see the whole army arrayed against you. You think, 'Oh, God! Eleven million of them; what will I do?' You turn to Krishna and say, 'Krishna, I don't need to do anything of this sort. No! I don't feel like fighting. Say whatever you say but I am leaving now. I am going to disappear from here. Even if I have to beg and eat, it is alright, but I don't want to be a part of this drama. No!'

Krishna says, 'Fool! Whether you kill these eleven million thoughts or not, it is of no consequence. They anyway have no life; they are dead already!'

Krishna says, 'Whether you kill them or not, they are dead already! You just take your arrow and act as if you are killing them! Just unclutch a few times. They are actually not there! It is just your fear that is giving power to these eleven million thoughts (people).'

Arjuna never bothered to look at the seven million people standing behind him: the self-healing thoughts. Arjuna never bothered to notice that. That is why I tell people, 'You clutch only to the negativity and suffer; you do not clutch to the positivity and experience bliss. The first thing you need to do is clutch to the positivity.'

Even after all these repeated teachings, you remain unconvinced. Then finally, the master gives you energy *darśan* – he reveals His *Viśvarūpa darśan* (His cosmic energy form) to you. He says, 'Alright you fool, you are unable to intellectually understand what I say. Now see who is talking to you about these things,' He then reveals His cosmic form to you. Then you get totally shaken up! You say, 'Oh, God...!' You see that the master is the embodiment of all the positive and negative perceptions and beyond everything as well. He is everything and He is beyond everything. His cosmic form, the *Viśvarūpa*, is the ultimate experience.

You then get the courage, 'After all, I will not be lost.' You get the courage and take your *gāṇḍīva*, the bow of Arjuna! Understand this important Sanskrit word: *gāṇḍīva*. It means 'something that cannot be taken away from you'. Unclutching is a technique that can never be taken away from you! It is said that Arjuna's bow and arrow were such that his quiver of arrows could never be exhausted. He was a born archer. Any *mantra* (powerful chant) can be taken away from you. But the technique of unclutching can never be taken away from you because it is your very nature. All you need to do is unclutch, unclutch and unclutch.

In ten days, Bhishma is lying on a bed of arrows. All your conditioning disappears. All the parental influence disappears and along with that, a few million thoughts disappear. It was Shikhandi who killed Bhishma. Understand who Shikhandi was. He was a transsexual. See, the first and basic parental conditioning that enters your system is the teaching that you are either a male or a female. You are taught to be very strongly associated with a particular gender. In reality, you have both male and female energies in you, but parental conditioning does not encourage this idea. Shikhandi is a rebel, who does not accept parental conditioning. Symbolically he is brought in to kill Bhishma! No one else can conquer Bhishma. Gender differentiation such as male or female is the first societal conditioning. Becoming gay or transsexual is the rebellion against that basic conditioning. Being a little crazy is good at certain times! The attitude of saying 'no'

is good to overcome parental conditioning. That is why in India you must leave home in order to break your societal conditioning and seek enlightenment. After you have conquered Bhishma, your parental and societal conditioning, you have to drop the attitude of Shikhandi; you have to drop Shikhandi, because he will not work against Drona, the next in line to be killed!

Removal of parental conditioning is a big success. Now, understand that parental conditioning will never die completely because the language that you have learned will never die till you leave the body. That is why Bhishma never really died. He was lying in a corner, on a bed of arrows, inactive, that's all. He cannot attack you any more. He will just be lying in one corner. You move beyond the influence of parental conditioning.

So the thoughts attacking you from parental conditioning lose power and lie incapacitated in one corner. The inner chatter and genetic structure of your parents will be with you until you leave the body. But they will not have the negative influence they once had. This is what the incapacitated body of Bhishma represents.

Once the Mahabharata War is over, all the Pandavas, the good thoughts, ask Bhishma who was lying on the bed of arrows to bless their coronation. Bhishma beautifully teaches them how to rule the country.

Draupadi, the common wife of the Pandavas, is unable to bear this. She says to Bhishma, 'Father, please keep quiet. I feel so disgusted listening to your words. You talk about noble things, but what happened when my *sari* was being ripped off and I was abused in public? What happened to your *dharma*, your moral code? Come on, answer me!'

Bhishma says, 'At that time, I was unable to talk. I did not have intelligence because I ate the food of Duryodhana. I committed *aśraya doṣa*, the sin of consuming impure food.'

Whoever pays you or paves your way in life, their quality will become your quality. Blessed are those who work under enlightened masters! Blessed are those whose boss is an enlightened master. Whoever pays you, their quality will enter into your head and become yours. Whether you believe it or not, unconsciously, you imbibe their quality. Bhishma says, 'I ate Duryodhana's food. I committed *aśraya doṣa*, the sin of taking food from an impure person. So, my intelligence never worked at that time. But now, because of Arjuna's arrows, because the individual consciousness has showered so many arrows of unclutching on me, all my impure blood has gone!'

If you constantly unclutch from parental conditioning, thoughts that enrich parental conditioning start to leave you. Then *dharma*, righteous awareness, emerges from your parental conditioning. Parental conditioning can put you in depression if you are constantly influenced by the negative thoughts that it generally brings with it. Instead, if you constantly unclutch from it, the same parental conditioning can help you maintain your *dharma*; it will teach you *dharma*! That is the story of Bhishma.

Bhishma is parental conditioning. He says, 'All the negative blood generated by impure food has left my body and that is why now, I can tell you what to do and what not to do.' Parental conditioning will be available to guide and help you only by the tenth day of continuously unclutching (tenth day of the Mahabharata war). It is only then that it will lose its negativity.

Once you overcome parental conditioning, your book-based spiritual knowledge surfaces next for you to fight! This is logical knowledge acquired through education. It is the intellectual stuff about spirituality that has not become a direct experience for you. It is still at the intellectual level. It becomes the reason that is stopping you from surrendering to an enlightened master. You are caught in educational conditioning. At this stage, you are fighting the character Drona (Arjuna's teacher) in the war!

People who have gained some spiritual knowledge through teachers or books, are unable to surrender to a living master because their previous teacher, in the form of the spiritual knowledge acquired so far, stands in front of them blocking the path to liberation. That is Drona.

Let me give the essence now.

The number eighteen is a mystical number. You cannot count more than eight with logic. In Satya Yuga, the first quarter of time, you could count only up to three; in Treta Yuga, the second quarter of time, you could count only up to seven; in Dwapara Yuga, the third quarter of time, you could count up to eight; in Kali Yuga, the fourth quarter of time, you started counting more than ten. Depression is sure to result if you have more than eight thoughts without going into your self-healing mode to remind you of your true nature.

When the ten senses of perception and action, *jnānendriya* and *karmendriya*, are added to the eight thoughts of the mind, it leads to depression. Either you should not count up to eight thoughts or your senses should not be active. Each sense creates millions of thoughts. You need to break from this eighteen in order to be enlightened.

The reference to eighteen million soldiers in the Mahabharata war is to the eighteen million thoughts in your system; eleven million on the negative side, and seven million self-healing ones. The moment you hear about a financial loss, you are depressed. It is negative. On the other hand, it is self-healing if you think, 'It does not matter,' and you let go. This attitude arises either as a click from a living master or as a self-illuminating healing thought.

Arjuna represents the individual consciousness. The laziness to fight with negative thoughts is what is called *tamas* – our attitude that delays our own enlightenment. The body is the land for which the fight is going on between the negative and positive thoughts. One hundred brothers are cloned as one hundred negative thoughts, the Kauravas. The Pandavas are sons of Nature, from Yama, Indra, Vayu and Ashwini Kumaras. The sons of Nature are always self-healing; the cloned ones are destructive.

Duryodhana is ego and possessiveness. Shakuni is cunningness. When Arjuna wonders how he can cope with these negative thoughts, he gives up in depression. He needs an enlightened master who tells him to unclutch. Arjuna, instead of owning up to his own cowardice, talks about his commitments to his family and his clan. He justifies his *tamas*. That is Arjuna's *vishāda*: his dilemma and depression. He tries to justify cowardice as compassion; compassion towards his fellow beings who are actually negative influences. Each arrow that Arjuna later shoots is one act of unclutching from the negative thoughts.

Why are Bhishma and Drona, a parent and a teacher, on the negative side? Self-healing thoughts can turn negative when they are surrounded by negative thoughts. If you are caught in something that has helped you grow in the past, but over time has lost the ability to teach you more, you get stuck in it, not knowing how to go past it. That is what Drona and Bhishma represent. They are as dangerous as Duryodhana and Dusshassana who are readily seen as evil. Drona taught archery and inspired Arjuna but in front of Krishna, Drona is also an enemy.

Next in the war to confront Arjuna is Karna who represents charity for selfish purposes towards material ends. He could not become enlightened through 'noble' acts. He became liberated only when he surrendered everything to the enlightened master Krishna. The master takes what you give in order to liberate you. Karna's good deeds stand in the way of his own enlightenment. Krishna asked for them and liberated him! That is why, it is Karna *mokṣa*, liberation, and not Karna *vadha*, destruction.



Bhishma is the embodiment of conditioning due to parents and elders. The first thing to come up when you try to unclutch is your early years of conditioning. That is why Bhishma comes up as the first commander in the war. After him comes Drona, the first teacher. After Drona was the charitable attitude, Karna. After Karna was the ego in the form of Duryodhana. This is how the leadership of the Kauravas opens up. Negative thoughts cannot stand by themselves. They need the support of Bhishma, Drona and Karna.

*Dharma* is the morality we must hold on to even if we are unclutched. We cannot slip into immoral activities (There were several people who come to support Arjuna in the war). Bhima is courage. Sahadeva is the embodiment of knowledge. Nakula has techniques to keep our bodies fit through yoga, etc. These are all Arjuna's supporters.

Finally, he who drives the chariot of Arjuna is the master, Krishna!

Your elders and teachers stand in front of you and prevent you from unclutching. Your good deeds and ego also stand in front of you. All the negativities are hiding behind these elders and good deeds. So you say, 'I don't want to fight; I would live by begging, but I don't want to fight.' Krishna tells Arjuna that these thoughts have no solid substance anyway, and all Arjuna needs to do is just shoot an arrow and act as if they need to die. When Arjuna is still not convinced with Krishna's words, He gives him *darśan*, His cosmic vision. The master shows himself as all positive and negative thoughts and beyond.

*Gandīva* is the tool that cannot be taken away from oneself. Arjuna's unclutching is represented by his *gandīva* that is believed to have an inexhaustible quiver of arrows. It means that the unclutching technique cannot be taken away from you because it is your very nature.

After ten days, parental conditioning becomes non-functional. It will never die, but it can be made inactive. This is what is represented by Bhishma lying on a bed of arrows, incapacitated. The Mahabharata war is over and Bhishma is lying on a bed of arrows. Bhishma teaches the Pandavas how to rule the country. Draupadi says, 'Why don't you keep quiet? What happened to all your righteousness when I was about to be disrobed in public?'

Bhishma says, 'I could not talk then. I was overwhelmed by negative thoughts. I was eating Duryodhana's food. Therefore, I could not think positively. I was overwhelmed by *aśraya doṣa*, the sin of impure food. Arjuna's arrows removed all the impure blood from me. Now I can think intelligently.'

Parental conditioning can make you depressed. If you unclutch from it, it can guide you like how Bhishma did, and lead you into righteous awareness.

These are the metaphors of Mahabharata.

The master creates the war within the disciple so that he can conquer his own negativity. Until that war is started, you live in hiding, *agnatavasa*, without your rightful kingdom, which is enlightenment!

**Q: Swamiji, what is the relationship between enlightenment and personality development?**

Enlightenment is not about developing your personality; it is about dropping your personality. What is personality development? A bunch of thoughts that provide clicks, or shifts in our thought pattern, so that our so-called problems disappear. Those 'self-help' thoughts will be alive only for a few days. Visualization and positive thinking have power only for a few days. These may provide temporary development but never a permanent solution. Only an enlightened master can continuously provide clicks and initiations to solve your problems. Not only that, a master continues to support you even after the clicks stop working.

A person who solves your problems even when the clicks stop working is an enlightened person.

Any book with a click will be a bestseller. When the clicks stop working, people blame themselves to be inadequate. They don't suspect the person who provided the clicks. They consider themselves to be at fault.

This is the real danger of swallowing material provided by unenlightened people. You fall into the danger of suspecting your own capability. The struggle to make an unworkable click function as a transformation technique becomes a rigorous practice, a *sadhana*.

**Q: Swamiji, what is needed to go beyond Drona, Karna and finally Duryodhana?**

Drona's killing required the involvement of four people - Arjuna who represents the individual consciousness; Krishna who represents the universal consciousness;

Yudhishtira who represents morality; Bhima who represents courage. The moral code of not acting against the teacher has to be dropped in order to go beyond the teacher. Here, the master takes charge of the situation. He absolves Arjuna and Yudhishtira of their guilt. Unless Drona falls, you cannot be enlightened. The strategy that Krishna employs to kill Drona is: *Do not tell a lie, but twist the truth enough to make it work.*

Understand, for me to tell you to drop your earlier bondages like your teacher, I must trust your individual consciousness so that you will not apply the same thing to me! It is a subtle game. This cannot be done verbally. Krishna tells Bhima to kill an elephant called Ashwatthama. Ashwatthama is also the name of Drona's son, who is everything to him. Krishna tells Yudhishtira, 'Announce that an elephant named Ashwatthama died in the war.' When Yudhishtira says, 'The elephant named Ashwatthama has died,' Krishna simultaneously blows his conch so that Drona does not hear the word 'elephant'. He only hears 'Ashwatthama has died.' Drona lays down his weapons in grief and gets killed.

Your morality has to agree to drop Drona. Here you cross morality, society's moral codes, for the sake of your ultimate master and enlightenment!

Next is Karna, who is good, compassionate and charitable. He is goodness, *satva*. You think the external world and people are real and so you show compassion. But this premise is not true. The external world outside and around you is not real as you think. You think that the 'seer' and the objects seen are different. The shift back and forth between the seer and what is seen is the process of seeing. The person who drops this shift is the one who has renounced. The shift stops, renunciation results and enlightenment occurs. The seer dissolves out of devotion, and only the seen remains. Then enlightenment, the seeing, happens.

You have to remove the weapons of compassion, such as the internal struggle with questions like, 'Is it reasonable to work for my own enlightenment while millions of people are starving out there?' This is a manifestation of what you perceive to be compassion. If this is your dilemma, then you are stuck in the fourteenth day of the Mahabharata War when Karna confronted Arjuna!

Because of Karna's compassionate deeds, all the arrows showered on him by Arjuna become flowers. When you are stuck in compassion, you cannot be directly killed. You are said to be in the space of heaven. But it is still not the enlightened space! A person may live a good, charitable and noble life and yet not be enlightened. They continue to live under the burden of engraved memories. Zen

masters say that even if an enlightened being kills, he causes only good through it; whereas with an unenlightened being, even if he does good, he may cause harm. If this truth is understood, then one will not question Krishna's actions in the war.

Krishna renders the *satvic* (goodness) quality of compassion harmless. Shalya, Karna's charioteer, represents spontaneity. Compassion is always driven by spontaneity. Compassion happens only when spontaneity is there. Krishna creates trouble between spontaneity and compassion. He separates Karna and Shalya – compassion and spontaneity.

Goodness is the brother of Nature, but it is standing in the way of Realization! So the master says, 'Finish this goodness. You cannot be stuck with compassion; even that is an attachment.' Overcoming Bhishma is on par with becoming an *ashramite* (living within a spiritual community and unclutching from parental conditioning) - the first step in dropping your bondages. Going past Drona is like taking *sanyās* - renouncing all attachments. Going past Karna is like living enlightenment and dropping even what we traditionally consider as 'being good'. Arjuna had to go past his elder brother Yudhishtira, who was goodness personified.

Finally you face your unguarded ego. You come face to face with yourself. Suddenly, you find that you do not want to stay with the master anymore. You feel disconnected from him. When you are at this stage, you are facing Duryodhana in the war. You cannot do much to break Duryodhana. The individual consciousness cannot do anything with the ego. Then, how can you fight and win?

This is when you need the complete protection of the master. When the last fight between you and your ego takes place, even the master cannot work directly on you. He has to wait until the ego is tired. When people say they feel disconnected, I talk and talk and tire their intellect and ego. Suddenly the ego falls and enlightenment happens!

After he falls, the blood of Duryodhana, the ego, becomes nectar, *amṛta*! That is why Draupadi applies it to her hair and ties her hair up, thus fulfilling a vow that she had taken. Without the ego, your logic can become an aid to teaching and preaching without ensnaring you. Without the ego, you can take guidance from parental conditioning without being influenced by it. You will find that the parental conditioning has lost its negativity and only the righteous qualities in it remain. Then you can take tips from your parents as to how to lead your life.

**Q: Swamiji, how do we differentiate between Drona and Sahadeva?**

Sahadeva was a master of astrology. Duryodhana goes to Sahadeva to fix an auspicious date to start the war. Sahadeva obliges and gives him the date, a new moon day. This means that if Duryodhana starts the war on this date, he will be victorious. Krishna is troubled since He knows that what Sahadeva says will come true. To change the course of the war, Krishna offers a traditional ancestral offering on the day before the new moon, instead of on the new moon day itself. The sun and moon are shocked. They come running together to Krishna to find out why He appears to be going against tradition.

Krishna asks them, 'What is the definition for the new moon day?'

They respond saying, 'It is the time when the sun and moon meet.'

Krishna says, 'Are not the two of you meeting now? So this is the new moon day!'

Thanks to Krishna's intervention, the war started one day in advance - the day before new moon, and Duryodhana was defeated.

Sahadeva was not bothered about whether Duryodhana was victorious or was defeated. He considered it his responsibility to give him the right guidance. That is his specialty.

I know that some disciples may go against me. Still I teach them and allow them in my ashram. I work on the possibility that they may benefit and be transformed. Drona will never do such a thing. That is the difference between Sahadeva and Drona.

**Q: Swamiji, what do Kunti and Draupadi represent?**

Kunti, mother of the five Pandavas, is innocent. She is the mother of individual consciousness (Arjuna). She provides a body into which the individual consciousness can land. She has no other role.

Draupadi, wife of the Pandavas, is *māyā* or illusion. Maya is the non-reality that is perceived as reality, and which can bind you as well as liberate you. Until she is wounded, Draupadi will bind you. If she is wounded she will work on the individual consciousness to liberate you. The very home you are in may drive you

to enlightenment when all the juice of life is lost. She is the sister of an enlightened master (Krishna), a subtle character. She can bind you or enlighten you. This is the meaning of the attempt made to disrobe her, which is a turning point in Mahabharata.

**Q:** *Swamiji, what are the roles of Vidura and Balarama?*

Vidura and Balarama are enlightened mystics who cannot help anyone. They disappear once the war begins.



# Planet Earth Is A Battlefield

*1.1 Dhritarashtra said:*

*Sanjaya,*

*What are my sons and the sons of Pandu up to,*

*On this holy land of Kurukshetra, eager and raring to fight?*

*1.2 Sanjaya said:*

*Sire,*

*Seeing the Pandava army in full formation,*

*Duryodhana approaches his teacher, saying:*

*1.3 My teacher,*

*Look at the great army of the sons of Pandu,*

*Expertly arranged by your intelligent disciple, the son of Drupada,*

*1.4, 1.5, 1.6 Many are the heroes and mighty archers equal to Bhima and Arjuna in war;*

*Yuyudhana, Viraata, and the great warrior Drupada, Drishtaketu,*

*Chekitaana, and the heroic king of Kaashi;*

*Also Purujit, Kuntibhoja, and the great man Shaibya; the valiant Yudhaamanyu,*

*The formidable Uttamauija, the son of Subhadra, and the sons of Draupadi, all great warriors.*

*1.7 Best of the Brahmanas, let me tell you about the powerful leaders who command my army, so that you know.*

It is significant that the opening statement of this great scripture was from a blind man. He had not only lost the power of sight, but also the power of insight, the wisdom to distinguish between right and wrong.

Dhritarashtra's brother Pandu handed over to him his throne, as well as the care of his five children. From the point of view of any righteous person, these five Pandava princes were Dhritarashtra's responsibility as well. However, the separation in Dhritarashtra's mind was clear when he said, 'My sons and the sons of Pandu.'

'What are they doing?' he asked Sanjaya plaintively, 'These sons of mine, the hundred Kaurava princes, and those five sons of Pandu, the Pandava princes?' He claimed no ownership of the Pandava princes and no responsibility or concern for their welfare. His concern was for his own sons.

Dhritarashtra's attachment to his sons, especially the crown prince Duryodhana, had blinded his powers of reasoning. Whatever his son did received his endorsement. From early adolescence, Duryodhana had been plotting to kill his Pandava cousins. Although Dhritarashtra pretended ignorance of his son's evil deeds, he was aware of what his son was up to.

Even when Duryodhana and his brother Dushshassana went to the extreme extent of disgracing Draupadi, the wife of the Pandava princes, by trying to disrobe her in public in his court, Dhritarashtra seemed powerless to act. When Duryodhana finally refused to give the Pandavas even a needlepoint of land, still Dhritarashtra kept quiet, ensuring that blood would be shed.

The sad part of the tale was that Dhritarashtra was aware that he was following the path of evil and that it would result in the destruction of his clan. Yet he seemed powerless to act otherwise. Dhritarashtra's tale is common to humankind. Often, we follow wrong paths even though we know it is wrong, almost as if under a hypnotic spell. We know that the result may not be in our best interests in the long term but we can't stop ourselves. Gita, therefore, begins from this premise.

It is not merely the fight between good and evil. It is far more than that. It is about our inner conflict in being unable to do the right thing, not being courageous enough to stand for what is right. It is about the lack of awareness, clarity and courage to follow the path of righteousness. It is a fight between good and evil within us, not merely the good and evil outside of us. Krishna, the Superconscious,



constantly looms over our being, yet we ignore this divine call within us, caught in the illusion that what we choose to do instead will make us happy.

Dhritarashtra refers to Kurukshetra, the site of this war, as a holy land or place of righteousness, *dharmaksetra*. People ask, 'How can a battlefield be called a holy land?' If you study the history of humanity, you find that it has always been a battlefield. Whether these wars were morally guided or misguided is a matter of opinion. What is right for one need not be right for another.

Practically every century, if not every decade, there have been battles in some part of the world. Almost all were created out of the belief that one party was morally right and the other wrong. In that sense, each battle was fought to restore righteousness, as believed by both parties. So, in that sense every battlefield was a holy site according to someone's belief, restoring the highest values and beliefs.

In the case of Dhritarashtra, he had an additional reason. He implicitly recognized the divinity of Krishna, whose mere presence on this battlefield conferred upon it the mantle of righteousness. Wherever Krishna was, that was where righteousness would prevail. Even in his confused state of thinking, there was enough clarity in Dhritarashtra's mind to acknowledge the supremacy of Krishna. This revealed itself in his choice of words. It was as if, at one level, Dhritarashtra knew that the fate of his Kaurava clan was sealed.

If Krishna was the epitome of righteousness, and Krishna was on the side of the Pandavas, how could the Pandavas lose? The tragic fate of Dhritarashtra was that he knew that the destruction of his clan was inevitable, and yet he was powerless to do anything about it.

Sanjaya was Dhritarashtra's minister and charioteer. By the grace of sage Vyasa, Sanjaya was given the power to see whatever was going on in the battlefield, so that he could faithfully convey to king Dhritarashtra and queen Gandhari the tragic happenings therein. His third eye or centre of intuition was opened, and not only could he see what was happening at a faraway location, but he had the power of intuition as well, to know what would unfold.

We are all blind in one sense or another, and Dhritarashtra represents the majority of mankind in this aspect. Blindness in this case is not only the physical inability to see. It essentially represents the inability to discriminate between right and wrong, and the absence of the desire to distinguish between right and wrong.

We can all be like Sanjaya, with our third eyes open instead of being blind like Dhritarashtra. This is one of the messages of Gita. Becoming aware of our inner

conflicts is the first step in opening the third eye, the energy center located between the eyebrows.

Again, it is interesting the way Sanjaya started his description of the proceedings.

Duryodhana was the crown prince, and for all practical purposes the king as well, since his father was both blind and powerless to stop him. Duryodhana saw the soldiers of the Pandava army arrayed in front of him. There were many ways he could have responded to the sight. As the person who single-handedly instigated this war, Duryodhana could have gloated, that surely he would vanquish his cousins. As a measure to reassure himself and his army, Duryodhana could have roared out in anger and in defiance. Yet, after seeing the army he chose to approach his teacher and mentor, Drona, one of the commanders of the Kaurava army, to seek his blessings.

As we shall see, the move was to ensure that any blame for the outcome of the war would fall on Drona's shoulders. Duryodhana approaching his mentor was more to hold him responsible than to seek reassurance or blessings.

This is how most people act when they go forward with a plan of action, knowing fully well that it is wrong and can lead to serious consequences. They find something or someone else to blame. It is well understood that whatever follows will be unpleasant, and what triggered it is their foolish action. Yet, there is solace in the belief that they can lay the blame on someone else, however illogical it may be.

Duryodhana understood well the modern management concept of delegation. Like many managers today, he delegated so that he could abdicate responsibility.

One man from the IT industry was telling me how things work in his company. He said:

When a customer asks our big boss, the CEO, if we can complete a difficult project for them within a week, our CEO first sends the request to the Divisional Manager, who then sends it down to a Project Manager, who in turn sends it to a team of programmers to study the cost.

When the project seems ambitious and not worth our while, we at the programmer level tell our boss, the Project Manager, 'It is impossible and foolish to take this on. There is no way we can do it in even a month.'

The Project Manager then tells the Divisional Manager, 'It is a difficult and expensive project and it cannot be done within a fortnight.'

The Divisional Manager in turn tells the CEO, 'It is a huge challenge and with a lot of overtime it could be done in a week.'

The CEO informs the customer, 'Our company will deliver it in three days!' - thereby making the programming team responsible for it.

Delegation can work miracles, as long as the person who delegates does not know what needs to be done!

Duryodhana was now exhibiting his mastery in this field of management. He was aware that there was no hope to win the war. However, his greed for power and wealth blinded him to a point where he could not face reality. He wished to change reality so that he could control the outcome. He could not take responsibility for the situation as it was, since he did not know how to. All he could do was turn to his mentors and tell them they were responsible for ensuring his success.

Duryodhana was blunt in his message to Drona on the battlefield. Drona was not a typical warrior. He was a *brāhmaṇa*, a scholar, and learned his skills of archery and warfare from his father, sage Bharadwaja. Drupada, the prince of Panchala, was a fellow disciple of Bharadwaja, and he had promised his childhood friend Drona part of his kingdom when he came to power. When Drona was in serious financial trouble and approached Drupada for help, Drupada insulted him and turned him away from his court. Drona became the teacher of the Pandava and Kaurava princes. At the end of their training, he demanded his fees as a teacher, his *gurudakṣiṇā*, as was the tradition. Instead of anything material, he asked them to capture Drupada and bring the king to him. Of his disciples, only Arjuna was ready to do this. Arjuna did as he was asked and brought Drupada as his prisoner of war to his guru Drona, as a gift.

Drona released Drupada and handed his kingdom back. Drupada was mortified at his capture and submission to Drona. He went into deep penance and sought a child who would kill Drona. Drishtadyumna was born to Drupada as a result of this penance, and he became, ironically, a disciple of Drona along with the Pandava and Kaurava princes. Though Drona was aware of the background of Drishtadyumna's birth, he still accepted him as a disciple and trained him in warfare. Dhrishtadyumna became the Commander-in-Chief of the Pandava army in this great war, and Drona was one of the opposing Commanders in the Kaurava army.

Duryodhana pointedly referred to Drona's lack of foresight in training his potential killer, who now led the opposing army. It was as though he was warning Drona not to be so trusting again and not to go easy on the opponent, who was once his student. Duryodhana then pointed out the other great Pandava warriors,

such as Bhima and Arjuna, who too were students of Drona, as well as a number of other great warriors fighting for the Pandavas.

Duryodhana then decided to explain to Drona about the great warriors on the Kaurava side. Duryodhana was no longer a disciple addressing his mentor. It was as if Duryodhana had hired Drona as a mercenary to wage a battle for him. Duryodhana alternately berated Drona for having trained the warriors of the opposing army and then pacified him by listing him at the head of his own great warriors.

Duryodhana was totally confused. He started off praising the strength of the Pandava army. This was not because he genuinely wanted to, but mainly to point out to Drona the mistakes Duryodhana felt Drona had committed.

At one level, as a *kṣatriya*, Duryodhana did not have respect for Drona, a *brāhmaṇa* scholar; he felt that a *brāhmaṇa* had no business engaging in warfare. However, knowing the skill of Drona as a warrior, Duryodhana had no choice but to keep him on his side; it would have been too dangerous for Duryodhana if Drona were to take sides with the Pandava princes.

At another level, Duryodhana had no trust in Drona. He always felt that Drona was partial to the Pandava princes and that Arjuna was his favorite. Duryodhana knew in his heart that given the choice, Drona would not support him. He knew that Drona had no respect for him, and considered him to be in the wrong. He also knew that Drona held Krishna in great esteem and did not believe that Duryodhana could succeed in this war.

Duryodhana was in deep inner conflict. He had no sense of guilt going to war against his brethren, as he desperately wanted to keep the kingdom for himself and did not believe that he would be safe as long as the Pandava princes were alive. His problem was not one of doing right or wrong. Whatever he did was right, according to him. He was not a man given to deep thinking.

However, Duryodhana had no trust in many of the great warriors who had taken his side. He knew that many, especially Drona, Bhishma, and Kripa, who were also the teachers of the Pandava princes, did not want to fight the Pandava army. He knew that they were compelled from a moral standpoint to fight for him and not as directed by their consciousness. This was the source of his conflict and uncertainty.

It was also strange that at the beginning of the war Duryodhana chose to go to Drona, and not Bhishma, his great grandfather and Commander-in-Chief. It was as if Duryodhana was afraid to tell Bhishma what he said to Drona.

Drona was a subject of the king, to whom Duryodhana could talk abrasively. Bhishma, on the other hand, was his great grandfather, the one who had given up his chance to be king to fulfill his own father's moral obligations, and to satisfy his father's lust. There was no way that Duryodhana could have said the same words to Bhishma at this stage of the war.

Duryodhana was not yet feeling desperate enough about the situation to confront Bhishma. At a later stage in the war, when it became clearer that the Kaurava army was in deep trouble, Duryodhana approached Bhishma and blamed him for being partial to the Pandava princes.

*Q: Swamiji, you talked about people who are physically blind and people who see yet are still blinded by ignorance. If a great king like Dhritarashtra could be blinded by his love for his son, how can ordinary mortals be any better?*

Dhritarashtra is a metaphor for the rest of humanity in the same way as the Mahabharata is a metaphor for life. One can learn to cope with physical blindness, although with difficulty. One is aware of one's blindness and takes the necessary action to circumvent any limitations imposed by this affliction.

Psychological blindness is far more difficult to cope with. Most of the time, you are not even aware that you are blind. There lies the problem. You can only look for a solution if you know that you have a problem. If you are unaware, you think you are normal and that all the problems you face as a result are normal too.

Look around you. There are many examples that you can see in real life. To many parents, their children can do no wrong, even when they are confronted with evidence.

A father once narrated a real life incident to me:

He borrowed money so that his intelligent son could attend a top boarding school in India. Even though it was a financial burden, the father wanted to ensure that his son was educated in the best school and could mix with children of well-connected and rich parents.

The son also excelled in sports and was even a captain of several teams. In his pre-final year at school, the warden in the hostel caught him with drugs and the young man was expelled. The father tried his best to prevent the expulsion,

but could not succeed. His son told him he was innocent, even though the warden and other children told the father that his son had a drug-related problem.

The boy was kept at home and went to a local school. Again teachers reported to the parents that the boy kept bad company and that they should be careful. The son told his father a different story. The father believed the son and refused to take him for the prescribed treatment.

Today this young man is over twenty-five years old. He barely managed to scrape through college, and cannot stick to any job and is a burden to the parents. He still has a drug problem, and yet the father finds it difficult to accept it and take him for treatment.

Is this an unusual incident? No, not at all. In many households there are similar issues with a child, where the parents find it impossible to face the reality of the situation. Reality is too harsh and they prefer to hide behind lies, often knowing that these are lies.

Why? Why are there so many Dhritarashtras amongst us? One prominent reason is that we employ denial to protect our ego. Other people may know that the son is a drug addict, but once the father accepts it, it becomes a publicly acknowledged fact. Until then, even if the rest of the world talks about it, he can hide under a bunch of lies and feel that all is well. Taking the child for treatment is like accepting the problem, which will result in shame and the need to accept some measure of responsibility, as the father sees it.

Social acceptance is of paramount importance for most people. If they lose that, they lose everything. Their entire life depends upon recognition and acceptance. People have such a low opinion of themselves or place such a low value on their own judgments that they act upon what others say or think. They dance to other peoples' tunes.

From childhood we are trained and conditioned not to believe in ourselves. We are forever told to do this or that, or more often *not* to do that or this. Children are rewarded if they obey and punished if they do not. They don't have a choice. Only the most rebellious of children may get away with what he or she chooses to do. For most others it is better, simpler and safer just to conform.

This basic acceptance of what your parents and elders decide as right and wrong for you carries over into adult life. Your role and path in life is defined for you as a child. You are given a manual of do's and don't's for life. This manual may be a list of ten, or one hundred or a thousand commandments.

This is the reason why most people are lifeless and dull. You are brought up... actually brought *down* from childhood, from the natural joy and curiosity of a child, to the dull state of an adult who can only live with the help of a manual. You are afraid to do anything that is not in the manual. You are scared to do anything that is different from what you are used to doing. You feel safe and secure only if you follow certain patterns.

Some people will occupy the same place at the dining table throughout their life. They will shop at the same places in their neighborhood. They will be proud that they have only a few selected friends throughout their life. Such people are already dead while they are still living.

If we think deeply, it is a simple reflection of our own insecurity. We are so afraid even to take the risk of changing our position at the dinner table, or adding to our circle of friends or considering a new routine. We are frozen in time and space. Of course, this will give us comfort; but this is the comfort of the dead. We become like buffaloes wallowing in the same spot in the mud, come what may. The buffalo is so conditioned that it will go back to that same spot. It is an animal and follows its instincts, but what about us?

Our habit is to establish ourselves in an identity and then get bound by that identity. We dare not question who we really are. The role that we play and the position that we have assigned to ourselves, or whatever society has assigned to us, becomes the most important thing in our life. To break that is to lose society's respect. That is truly worse than death for many of us.

There are people who say that honor is more important than life; death over dishonor was a favorite motto of some kings. Does anyone stop to think about the meaning of honor? Who defines honor for you? Why is the life and joy of a daughter less important than the opinion of society? Why does the character of a wife have to be defined by what a passerby says?

Honor is a code that society lays down to control us through fear and greed. It is a moral code, a code of conscience, a code being imposed from outside. It is not a voice from your inner space. It is not a signal from your consciousness.

Be very clear, conscience is not consciousness. Conscience is a convenient anchor for you to hang feelings of guilt upon. If you do not punish your daughter or wife because they seem to be violating your societal code, you would feel guilty. You justify your inhumanity by your need to absolve yourself of societal guilt.

When we operate in this mode we operate under assumptions of some duty that we owe to life and society. Life does not expect us to fulfill any obligations on its

behalf, but society does. There is no duty that we owe to anybody - to our spouses, sons and daughters, parents or anyone else. As long as we operate in a mode of being obligated, we behave in a business mode, on a conditional basis.

When we shift to unconditional relationships, there is no such thing as duty. When you do things out of deep awareness and without expectation of reward, the word *duty* will leave you forever.

It is a responsibility that we have as human beings to be compassionate towards others, and in that mode of compassion we can never harm anyone or tolerate harm coming to another. When we operate out of compassion, we operate out of intelligence. When we operate out of a need to fulfill some duty or moral obligation, we operate out of blind conditioning. We operate without awareness.

That is what Dhritarashtra does here. In addition to being visually handicapped, he is also burdened by his duty to his sons, especially his eldest. After all, Duryodhana is the crown prince and as his father, Dhritarashtra feels he owes the prince his support irrespective of what harm he causes.

Unfortunately for him, Dhritarashtra never transcends the role of dutiful love towards his son. If Dhritarashtra's boundaries of compassion had extended beyond Duryodhana to cover others, such as the Pandava princes, this epic would have ended differently.

We too can have a different ending to our life's story if we expand the boundaries of our relationships with awareness. Our eyes will be truly opened. We will not only see but we will see intelligently too.

This attitude has nothing to do with one's position in life. It depends only on whether we allow ourselves to be blinded by ignorance, by what we consider to be our duty based on societal regulations, or whether we act in awareness of our true responsibilities in life.





## Ego Needs Support

*1.8 You, Bhishma, Karna, Kripa, Aswatthama, Vikarna and the son of Somadatta,*

*All always victorious in battle.*

*1.9 Many other heroes there are who are prepared to lay down their lives for my sake; all well equipped with different weapons, and well experienced in warfare.*

*1.10 Our unlimited army is protected by Grandsire Bhishma,*

*Their limited army is protected by Bhima.*

*1.11 Now all of you, wherever you are positioned,*

*Promise full protection to Bhishma.*

*1.12 Bhishma, the mighty patriarch of the Kuru dynasty and grandsire,*

*Then blew upon his conch loudly, roaring like a lion and Duryodhana was joyful.*

Duryodhana was a coward by nature, suffering from a deep inferiority complex and a strong need for attention. He had always been threatened by the fact that his Pandava cousins were superior to him and his brothers. He was especially afraid of Arjuna and Bhima, who were physically stronger and more skilled than him. Like all bullies through the ages, Duryodhana was only afraid of being overpowered by someone whose physical power was greater than his own.

Duryodhana felt secure only when surrounded by cronies. His strength and valor arose from the feeling of being supported by his clan and the army around him. On the positive side, Duryodhana was an extremely generous friend who gave

his all for the sake of someone he trusted. This quality had attracted strong men like Karna to him who swore undying loyalty. Even though Karna knew that Arjuna was his own brother, all he could say to his mother Kunti was that she would finally be left with five sons, implying that one of her sons, either Arjuna or Karna, would perish in the war. Such was the loyalty that Duryodhana evoked in his friends.

Duryodhana now rightly went on to claim that there were a number of people, who were great warriors, who would willingly lay down their lives for him. These warriors might have been aware that Duryodhana was an immoral person, but such was their commitment to him that it did not matter.

Duryodhana then began to boost his own morale by saying that the power of the Kaurava army led by Bhishma was immense, whereas the Pandava army with Bhima as one of the commanders was limited in power. Duryodhana's reference to Bhima alongside Bhishma was due to the fear that he had, of the oath that Bhima had taken - to break Duryodhana's thigh and drink his blood to avenge the insult to Draupadi. Duryodhana knew in his heart that this would happen and the only factor that could prevent it would be the protection of Bhishma.

Duryodhana then addressed the Kaurava army, exhorting them to support their Commander-in-Chief Bhishma. In response, Bhishma blew his conch like a lion, making Duryodhana joyful.

Bhishma was the first Kaurava Commander-in-Chief and Duryodhana wanted to make sure that the entire Kaurava army was committed to his leadership. In the past, Duryodhana had not hidden his feelings that Bhishma was partial to the Pandavas. Now, however, the die was cast, and Bhishma, the greatest warrior either side had known, was leading the Kaurava army. Duryodhana wanted to take no chances that his past hatred towards Bhishma would affect his assembled supporters.

In some ways Duryodhana had no choice. Though he knew that Bhishma, as well as Drona, would have gone with the Pandava princes and Krishna had they not been bound by their strong bonds of duty, he could not afford to antagonize them.

Bhishma was the grand sire and patriarch of the Pandava and Kaurava clan. Bhishma was born to Ganga as Devavrata. He was the only surviving son of eight sons whom Ganga had given birth to. When his father king Shantanu wanted to marry Satyawati, a daughter of a fisherman, Devavrata swore never to marry so that his stepmother Satyawati's children could have access to his father's throne.

Satyavati was the grandmother of both Pandu and Dhritarashtra. Bhishma was highly respected for his valor and sagacity. It is one of the greatest ironies of Mahabharata that wise men like Bhishma and Drona chose to be on Duryodhana's side, knowing fully well that whatever path Duryodhana was following was morally incorrect.

In the highest spiritual sense there is no right or wrong morally. Everything is neutral. Bhishma and Drona were not ordinary people. They were highly learned in the scriptural truths. Moreover, they were fully aware that Krishna was an incarnation, and the very fact that Krishna sided with the Pandavas was a clear indication to them as to how the war would unfold. As great warriors themselves, they had no fears about their own deaths; and more importantly they had no guilt about what they had embarked upon.

Men like Bhishma and Drona, as well as others such as Kripacharya, trusted their awareness. Duryodhana was their prince and they were committed to him. They were not concerned about the result of the war; to them it was a certainty that Duryodhana would perish and they would too, along with him. In fact, there is a point in the war when Krishna was greatly angered at the rout that Bhishma was causing in the Pandava army and unhappy at the deferential way Arjuna was treating Bhishma. Krishna got down from Arjuna's chariot that He was driving and advanced menacingly towards Bhishma.

Bhishma instantly laid down his arms, joined his palms in prayer to the advancing Krishna who was wielding His *sudarśana cakra*, the divine discus weapon on His finger, and greeted Him. 'Lord, it will be the greatest blessing for me to die at Your hands.'

To these great warriors, dying on the battlefield was the duty of a *kṣatriya*, a warrior. What was more important to them was that they were rooted in the awareness of the present moment, carrying out their duty. They weren't concerned with the righteousness of Duryodhana's motives. Their awareness transcended the moral rights and wrongs established by society and religion. They disapproved of Duryodhana's insult of the Pandava princes and Draupadi in the court but did not protest. They disapproved of Duryodhana's instigation of this war and yet took his side, knowing fully well that what lay ahead was destruction.

This was not foolishness or resignation. This was surrender to the inevitable, surrender to the Divine. At the level of their consciousness, these great masters allowed Nature to take its own course, and allowed themselves to be swept along with the tide.

To relax and allow whatever happens to happen is the sure sign of an evolved spirit. Ordinary human beings have the freedom to think, choose and act. As a result, they think they are in control of their destinies. In a sense they are; they make their decisions and act upon them. But it is their unconscious *saṁskāras*, the memories, value systems and beliefs that drive them into and through all these decisions.

A cycle is created as the *saṁskāras* lead to certain actions and those actions in turn mould their mental set-up and reinforce these *saṁskāras*. Yet, a human being has the choice to break out of this cycle and live in freedom from his *saṁskāras*.

It is our constant conflict with Nature that leads to our suffering. We believe that we act out of intelligence, when most of the time our actions are driven by instinct, the unconsciousness where the *saṁskāras* reside. The unconscious mind operates at a much higher speed and stores far more data than our conscious mind. Typically, if the unconscious mind is capable of storing and accessing 60 million images within a short time, the conscious mind during the same period can process 60 at best. The speed of the unconscious mind has been designed by Nature to cope with life or death issues. Unfortunately, this system gets misused for all other mundane issues as well.

If we learn to flow with Nature, like the reeds in a river, as they say in Tao, we will always do the right thing. We suffer when we resist Nature and therefore limit our options. There are two ways to live life. One is to accept the world and life as it is, what in Sanskrit is termed *śṛṣṭi dṛṣṭi*. The other way is to try to make circumstances evolve according to our viewpoint, called *dṛṣṭi śṛṣṭi*.

The first attitude, one of acceptance, brings happiness; the second, one of resistance, brings suffering. No one can change the world according to his viewpoint. It is an exercise doomed to encounter failure.

In our lives, we cannot even change the attitude of our neighbor or our spouse.

At best, we can transform ourselves, that's all.

All talk about revolutionizing the world is just useless talk. No revolution has ever succeeded in bringing about any significant, positive change. Revolutionaries who claim that they are against dictatorship become dictators themselves. That has always been history.

Ironically, an enlightened master has no such freedom. He is a faithful channel of the universal energy, *Parāśakti*, the divine Existence. Every move and every

thought is at the behest of the Divine. An enlightened being is beyond choice. An enlightened being is in complete surrender to the Divine.

The scale that is applied to ordinary humans cannot measure the motives and actions of an enlightened being. Their actions are taken in a no-mind, thought-free state that flows constantly in the present, with no expectations of what may happen in the future and no regrets about what happened in the past. Their actions may seem immoral or at least strange when perceived through the lens of the rules and regulations of society. But they are beyond society.

Bhishma was of divine origin, the son of Ganga. He had the gift of living as long as he wanted and to die when he wanted. His integrity and morality were the standard for his era. Yet Bhishma kept quiet when Draupadi was attempted to be disrobed and insulted. He did not act when Duryodhana denied the Pandava princes even a patch of land. He chose to fight for Duryodhana.

However, when Duryodhana requested him to lead the Kaurava army, Bhishma told him that the Pandava princes were as dear to him as Duryodhana was, and while he would wage war against their army, he could not take their lives. This was the condition under which Bhishma agreed to fight against the Pandava army on Duryodhana's behalf.

Bhishma had repeatedly counseled Duryodhana against his evil deeds towards the Pandava princes and Duryodhana was aware of how Bhishma opposed his acts. Yet, in this instance, Bhishma's compassion for Duryodhana overcame his distaste for his actions and behavior. Bhishma understood the desperate fears running through Duryodhana's mind and felt the need to reassure him.

In response to these exaggerated claims of Duryodhana, Bhishma blew his conch as a sign of resounding affirmation of whatever had been said by Duryodhana. Sanjaya said that Bhishma's conch sounded like the roar of a lion, coming from the oldest and the bravest of all the warriors assembled on the battlefield. It was also an affirmation of Bhishma's own support to the Kaurava prince and the signal for the war to begin. Bhishma's conch was a celebratory signal, seeking victory.

**Q: Swamiji, how can there be no right and wrong in what we do? Can we then do whatever we wish without fear? Need someone have no fear of the hereafter if one is powerful enough to overcome societal authority?**

At the highest spiritual level, at the level of Existence, right and wrong do not happen in the way we think. Nature does not follow our societal rules of right and wrong. This is why we are often in anger and sorrow when thousands are destroyed in natural calamities or when young ones die in accidents.

We say Nature is cruel. We ask, 'Does God exist? God is supposed to be compassionate. How can He allow these things to happen?'

We have no understanding of how Nature operates. Nature just is. It does not accept any conditions known to our logic. People only dimly understand the laws of Nature.

Let us imagine a situation where you are driving a car and you run over an anthill. The car destroys a whole colony of ants. Would you have even noticed it? You would drive on without being aware of what havoc you had caused upon this colony of ants. Had you run into a moose or a deer, you certainly would have known because your car would have been damaged, but not so with an anthill.

Nature takes as much notice of us as we do of ants. The frequencies are different, just like how our size and frequency are different from those of ants. Enlightened beings operate at the frequency of Existence. They follow the laws of Nature, not of humans. When I said there is no right and wrong in Nature, it applies at the level of Existence and enlightened masters.

It is true that at the level of human beings you need to have guidelines of right and wrong, of what to do and what not to do. But be careful. When these are enforced without understanding they will never work. Most of the regulations laid down by many religions are beyond understanding. One religion says you cannot eat pork. Another prohibits beef and yet another stipulates that everything can be and must be eaten. One religion says that you can marry only once and must stay with that spouse for the duration of your life. Another says you can leave one spouse and take another; some say you can be married to four at a time.

Different religions say contradictory things about what is right and wrong, and they have different gods and different versions of heaven and hell. It is as if each religion issues a different passport and visa when you die!

If one thinks about all this with awareness, the underlying reasons will become clear. The rights and wrongs that society and religions lay down have nothing to do with the truth of existential reality. These regulations, which define our conduct, be they right or wrong, are in place for the sake of self-preservation. It is like saying, 'I agree not to kill you and in turn you agree not to kill me.' This is

gradually extended across society. Such regulations are needed to provide safety to all those who live within that society.

What about those actions that extend beyond the individual? When one group attacks another group and kills its people, with or without provocation, how can you justify it? When you kill someone else in defense of your country you are called patriotic, and you are celebrated as a hero. But you are still a murderer! If the murder is carried out in the name of patriotism, does it become justifiable?

Throughout the history of mankind there have been hundreds, if not thousands of wars. In each war the victor was always considered to be in the right. All these wars were in defense of so-called noble principles. Whoever won had a nobler principle, that's all. If Hitler had won world War II, history would have been rewritten and he would have been a hero.

It is as the Tao says: There is no right and wrong, no good and bad, no light and darkness. Everything that is terribly wrong has something right in it for someone. Everything wonderfully right has something wrong in it for someone. Such is the truth of life.

What has been considered right at one point in time and space, is considered wrong at another point in time and space. What is considered absolutely incorrect at one time becomes universally acceptable in another era. At one time in India, it was considered a duty and an honor for a woman to commit suicide by walking into the funeral pyre of her dead husband. If she did not voluntarily walk into the pyre, she was forcibly burnt. At one time, so-called witches were burnt at the stake and it was considered justifiable. Today these acts are considered barbaric aberrations.

Fundamental, existential truths cannot oscillate between right and wrong. They have to be one or the other at all times and in all space. Unfortunately, in the true existential sense, there is no such definition. It is simply because Existence does not operate that way. Existence is random, truly random. Randomness cannot be differentiated as right random and wrong random.

Human nature is such that whenever rules are made, the first impulse is to break the rule. This impulse is deeply rooted in us and is part of our desire to be free of all bondages. If there is a speed limit, and if you do not see a cop, you will speed. If you happen to get caught speeding and you are in a country where corruption is an acceptable practice, you may try to wriggle your way out through a bribe.

One can understand a child doing such a thing. A child is driven by curiosity and does things that may seem dangerous and incorrect to an adult. But why does a conditioned adult break rules? First of all he does not believe that the rule applies to him. He is perfectly happy to have the rule applied to everyone except himself. Each man and woman would like to be free from rules that bind them, but want them to be applied to others so that they can be free from interference.

Anything that you do out of a sense of duty to your conscience is always forced, because it is based only on what you have been taught as right or wrong. Because it is forced, you will always want to break away in some way or other from some of those rules. It is only when you consider something to be right or wrong based upon a deep internal awareness, that you do it with earnestness. You do it because something deep inside you tells you it is the right thing to do. Conscience is societal. consciousness is natural.

As an adult, whatever you do must be done in awareness, not out of force.

Unfortunately, we always get caught in this game of choosing between right and wrong. We are conditioned from early childhood to play this game. Our emotional strings are controlled as if by a master puppeteer, through greed and fear. It could be our temple telling us that if we covet our neighbor's wife we will go to hell. Or it could be our legal system that tells us that if we do not pay taxes we will go to jail.

We are invariably ruled either by fear or by greed. Fear and greed are embedded deeply into our psyche through conditioned mindsets of good and bad. Be very clear, it is not the conscious mind directing us, not at all. It is the unconscious mind driving us through embedded memories, memories that we have limited access to.

If we act out of greed, we have temporary pleasure. Often, even that pleasure is tinged with guilt. For example, if you give alms to a beggar, you will wonder at the back of your mind whether you are doing the right thing, or possibly supporting one of their bad habits. You will wonder if you are encouraging other able-bodied people to beg. If the beggar is disabled, you will remember stories about how children are maimed and used by beggar mafia in some countries! For every well-intentioned action, your mind can bring up at least a few arguments against it.

Our concepts of right and wrong seem absolute to us, or at least absolute in relation to our conditioning. First, we need to drop our judgment about something or someone being right or wrong. We are no one to judge and in any case, our



judgments are based purely upon our own social conditioning. God Almighty does not judge, contrary to what religions may say. So we can very well drop our negativities first. Then we will realize that our impressions about other people's negativities will also drop. We will start seeing good in each person and in every situation.

Second, we need to raise our awareness through meditation. We need to look inwards and connect with our consciousness. There is no other way for us to understand and accept the ways of Nature. There is no absolute right or wrong in Nature. Nature just flows. With meditation, we too learn to flow.

As you flow, you learn to act in awareness. You learn to extend a helping hand to a passerby even if it seems to involve personal danger. Actually, you will fall so much in tune with Existence that you won't even feel that there is any danger that can threaten you. You will begin to experience that everything is happening only for the good.

One of our healers told us this incident recently.

As he was walking to a meeting he passed a man lying face down on the road. Normally he would have walked by, and he almost did. Then something strange happened. He thought of me and his legs couldn't move! They in fact moved backwards to the spot where the man lay. Despite the delay, he stayed till an ambulance came to pick up the man.

This is not about right and wrong. This is about awareness. This is not about what others would say or do. He said, a few hundred people passed by looking and not doing anything. If so many people chose to do nothing, then some would consider the right action based on that alone, is it not? But for the person who stopped to help, the correct action was to be of service.

There are people who interpret their religious scriptures to mean that they can destroy those who do not believe in their God or their principles. How can you call these people or their religious leaders who encourage this attitude spiritual? There are millions, perhaps billions, who believe this implicitly and therefore act without awareness. How can spirituality be exclusive? It is never exclusive. It is inclusive, always inclusive. This divisiveness is what causes the collective unconsciousness to rise in our society.

Whenever something is collective, it will be from the unconscious. It can never be from awareness. To be in consciousness, you need to work individually. Conscience can be collective; consciousness is the path of aloneness.

Do not worry about what others say about right and wrong, including me. That is my awareness, not yours. Go into your inner space and find out your own answers through a process of connecting with your awareness. Only then can you be free from your bondages of fear and greed, as well as guilt. Only then will you be liberated.



## The War Begins

*1.13 Conches, bugles, trumpets, drums and horns all suddenly sounded,  
Their combined sound renting the skies.*

*1.14 Seated on a magnificent chariot drawn by white horses,  
Krishna and Arjuna sounded their divine conches.*

*1.15 Krishna blew on His conch, the Panchajanya;*

*Arjuna sounded the Devadatta, and Bhima sounded his great conch called  
Paundra.*

*1.16, 17, 18 King Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, blew his conch, the  
Anantavijaya, Nakula and Sahadeva blew the Sughosha and Manipushpaka.*

*That great archer, the king of Kashi, the great fighter Shikhandi,  
Drishtadyumna,*

*Virata and the invincible Satyaki, Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, and the  
others,*

*Such as the mighty-armed son of Subhadra all sounded their conches.*

Conches, called *śankha* in Sanskrit, are the shells of mollusks that live in the sea. From time immemorial, Hindu scriptures have referred to the use of conches during ritualistic, devotional and celebratory occasions. In general, a conch was blown to signify obeisance to the Divine or royalty, or in celebration of an auspicious and victorious occasion. Blowing the conch signified joy.

It is said that the *valāmpuri śankha*, the conch that describes a right hand spiral, has exceptional supernatural properties. Blowing into a *valāmpuri śankha* produces the sound *aum*, the *pranava mantra*, which is the sound of creation. Experiments have

shown that when the sound of *aum* is recorded digitally, the shape of the sound wave is a spiral similar to that of a *valāmpuri śankha*!

Each of the great warriors in the Mahabharata war had his own personal conch, and each one's signature was the sound produced by his conch. Most of the great warriors also had their own flags that flew on their chariots and their weapons, especially their bows, had great spiritual significance. They were often bestowed upon the warrior by the Divine after a long penance. It is said that even if his flag were masked by dust and distance, Arjuna's presence in any part of the battlefield would be known by the sound of his conch and the twang of his bow!

When Bhishma blew his conch in support of Duryodhana, the response was tumultuous on both sides. Every warrior on the battlefield took out his conch and blew his signature note. Of all the sounds that emanated at that moment, a few were heard above the rest. Krishna sounded his *Pañcajanya*, the conch of Vishnu. The sound of Krishna's *Pañcajanya* drowned out all other sounds on the battlefield. It was the announcement for all that the Divine was already present with the Pandava army.

Vyasa, through Sanjaya, says that Krishna sounded His divine conch. This is significant since Vyasa attributes divinity only to Krishna's conch, not to anyone else's. He refers to Krishna as Madhava, and later as Hrishiksha. Madhava signifies that Krishna is an incarnation of Vishnu, who is the husband of Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and fortune. In this context, it signifies that whoever Krishna sides with would be invincible. Krishna is then referred to as Hrishiksha, controller of the senses, the superconscious, who has created the *māyā*, the illusion that is this great war of Mahabharata.

Vyasa implies that all that happens is a creation of Krishna. For what purpose? He alone knows. The Divine truly has no purpose. The Divine IS, that's all.

Krishna was Arjuna's charioteer. The chariot was a blessing from Agni, the fire god. This chariot was said to be capable of traversing all the three worlds. His bow *Gāṇḍīva* was also a gift from Agni. Arjuna is referred to as Dhananjaya, winner of wealth, in reference to his ability to generate the wealth needed by his brother Yudhishtira.

Not to be outdone, Bhima blew on his conch Paundra, a fearsome sound that invoked dread amongst the Kaurava army. Here Bhima is called Vrikodara, one with the stomach of a wolf; Bhima was forever hungry and ate more than all his

brothers combined, and yet had a lean and flat stomach of a wolf, and like that predator, he was feared by his enemies for his strength and anger.

Bhima's conch was followed by that of the other three Pandava princes, Yudhishtira, Nakula and Sahadeva and then by the great warriors, Drupada, Virata, Satyaki, Shikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna, Abhimanyu and others, all blowing their conches in celebration of their impending victory.

Each of these warriors had a great history. Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandava princes, was born to his mother Kunti through the grace of Yama, the god of justice and death, and was universally known as Dharmaraja, the king of truth, as he was never known to tell a lie. Nakula and Sahadeva were born to Madri, the second wife of Pandu, through the grace of the Ashwini Kumaras, celestial beings.

Drupada, the king of Panchala, was the father of Drishtadyumna and Draupadi, wife of the Pandavas. Drishtadyumna was born to Drupada, when he prayed to Shiva to give him a son who would match Drona in valor and vanquish him in battle. Virata was the king in whose kingdom the five Pandava princes and Draupadi spent a year in hiding. His daughter married Abhimanyu, Arjuna's son by Subhadra, Krishna's sister.

Shikhandi was born as Bhishma's nemesis, when Amba, a princess whom Bhishma captured as a bride for his stepbrother Vichitravirya, immolated herself to be reborn to avenge her shame.

It is as if Sanjaya, the narrator of the incidents of war, repeatedly tries to impress upon the blind king Dhritarashtra the caliber of the Pandava warriors and their glorious antecedents, so that the shock of the impending disaster to the Kuru clan of Dhritarashtra would not be so unexpected. Sanjaya specifically refers to these warriors as '*aparājita*', invincible, always victorious in whatever task they undertook, with the clear implication that they would be victorious in this war that they had embarked upon as well.

It is significant that Bhishma's conch, which was sounded by him as the Commander-in-Chief of the Kaurava army, to signify the beginning of the war, was responded to by Krishna, and not by Drishtadyumna, the Pandava Commander-in-Chief, or any of the other Pandava princes. Krishna's was a response, not a reaction to the challenge issued by Bhishma. It was an acceptance of the fact that whatever was thrown at the Pandava army was being accepted by Him, Divinity Incarnate.

Krishna, as the superconscious guide of the Pandava princes, absolves them of any guilt or wrongdoing by taking upon Himself the responsibility for whatever is to happen. The rest of the Pandava army, including Arjuna, follow His lead by blowing their conches.

*Q: Is the Mahabharata war a conflict of egos? If so, is there good ego and bad ego?*

This is a beautiful question. As I mentioned in the introduction, Mahabharata is not a fight between what is good and what is evil. In a spiritual sense there is nothing that is absolutely good or inherently evil. As you said, not only may it be a mix, as Tao puts it, but more importantly, Existence is nonjudgmental. Whatever happens just happens and in turn causes something else to happen.

Mahabharata is the metaphorical war between the positive and negative beliefs, thoughts and value systems collectively termed *saṁskāras*. The nearest equivalent English word may be 'engrams', engraved memories that lie deep in our unconscious mind. These engrams trigger what we call *karmas*, action arising out of unfulfilled desires. They are responsible for the mindset or *vāsanās* that cling to the spirit departing the dead body-mind system.

To be free of engraved memories, unfulfilled desires and the mindset arising out of these is the route to liberation and bliss. This state when one is free of *saṁskāras*, *vāsanās* and *karmas* is the state of enlightenment. Krishna's prescription to Arjuna is the process that leads to this enlightenment. That is the *yoga*, the uniting of mind, body and spirit without a trace of these negative and positive tendencies within us, which is the message of the Gita.

The simplest way to this uniting that results in bliss is the clear understanding of *jīva*, *īshvara* and *jagat* - self, God and the world - and that they are one and the same.

We are all a creation of the interaction between these three entities. When we celebrate their existence, all three will reveal their mysteries to us. Please understand that this is not a moral advice. It is a spiritual technique.

We will never be able to realize our Self, understand ourselves, until we accept ourselves and celebrate what we are. As long as we are fighting with what we are, we will never be able to realize our self, *jīva*.

Usually we carry two identities, one is *ahankāra*, outer ego, and the other is *mamakāra*, inner ego. Outer ego is the identity that we present to the world, project to the world. This is how we want the world to see us. The other is inner ego. This is the identity we truly believe to be us.

Our whole life is nothing but the fight between these outer and inner egos. The struggle between you and you eats your whole life. Stop. Just accept and celebrate whatever you are. You will see that you are realizing the Self. The self-realization is postponed again and again just because of the fight between you and you. The moment you stop fighting, suddenly you see both the identities disappear into the realization that outer and inner egos exist just because of the tension between them. Whatever you are, accept it and say a resounding 'yes' to yourself as you are. Suddenly you will see that both these egos just disappear. Accept and celebrate the existence of your Self as it is. Neither do you need to develop the self in the outer world, nor do you need to develop it in the inner world. Accept and celebrate, suddenly you will see the Self will be realized.

Next, let us look at *jagat*, the world. Understand that all the difficulties and problems between you and the world are just because you do not look at the world as a mystery. Continuously you are trying to overrule the world with your logic. You are trying to understand the world with your intellect, instead of celebrating, instead of accepting, and instead of enjoying. You are just analyzing, segregating and trying to bring it under your control. If you are continuously using your logic, analyzing and judging, trying to bring things under your control, you will miss it. Just accept and celebrate Existence, Nature, the world, with all its different dimensions and paradoxes.

Do not judge. Continuously we keep judging that something is right, or something is wrong. We feel that something is supposed to happen or something is not supposed to happen. Understand: whatever happens is auspicious. In Sanskrit, the word *Shiva*, that refers to the god of rejuvenation and one of the Hindu trinity, means causeless auspiciousness, it is also called *maṅgalatva*. For no reason, this auspiciousness is overflowing. Everything that is happening in your life is increasing your frequency, raising your intelligence. Causeless expansion is happening.

In the whole world there are only two kinds of people living. One, the person who feels that whatever is happening in the world is against his will and has to be changed. He is constantly trying to alter, trying to judge, trying to criticize things happening in the world. There is another group, a rare group that feels that

whatever is happening is causeless auspiciousness. Whoever feels whatever is happening is auspicious inside and outside, lives like Shiva. They live in Shiva consciousness. They live in eternal bliss. They live in celebration.

Understand, every happening including disease and death has a message for us. They have something to teach us. They raise our intelligence, raise the frequency of our consciousness. In the whole drama of the cosmos, everything that happens in your life brings auspiciousness to you. It brings *maṅgalatva* to you, it adds to you.

Look at the world as a mystery, as an intelligent mystery. When you understand it is an independent intelligence, a mystery, everything happening in your life will open itself and teach you the lesson it has brought. When suffering comes to you, if you approach it with non-acceptance, or resistance, it will create only pain in you. It will only add suffering to you. If you approach the same incident, the same suffering, with deep respect and acceptance, suddenly you will see the same suffering reveals its mysteries to you. It will show you the cause, why it happened in your life and the lesson it brought to your life.

Everything happening in the world is auspiciousness, including what you call natural calamities. There is no such thing as inauspiciousness. One group lives like Shiva. The other lives like *shava* or a dead body. Whether you live like Shiva, as God, or *śava*, a corpse, only you can decide. Understand, the cosmos is causeless auspiciousness. The universe is reasonless, causeless auspiciousness. Accept and celebrate the very existence of the world.

The third, *Īshvara*, God, is the source of both *jīva* and *jagat* – the self and the world. As long as you carry doubt or faith about the existence of God, you don't experience God. Understand, just like doubt, faith is also an obstruction. I have seen people who believe but never try to experience. They continue to believe, believe, and believe but do not do anything to experience.

So now, drop both your doubt and your faith. The moment you see an object in front of you, you know the Creator exists. If creation exists, its Creator also exists. The very presence of the creation in front of you proves the existence of the Creator. He is just creativity overflowing for no reason. He is just constant creativity, which is expanding, expanding, and expanding - a constant Big Bang.

He is creation, created and creator, all three expressed as creativity. Celebrate the existence of creativity. The very existence of creation is the solid proof that the



Creator or creativity exists. Just celebrate the existence of the independent intelligence. Celebrate the existence of God as creativity.

When you celebrate the existence of these three - self, God and the world, suddenly you realize that the perception of these three entities being independent and separated by barriers is created by your unconscious mind. There is no barrier, it is just one pure existence, pure consciousness, pure celebration of what we call *sat*, *chit* and *ānanda* - truth, consciousness and bliss. Understanding that self, world and God are not three different entities, and then celebrating the existence of this ONE core is what I call Living Enlightenment.

Understand and celebrate the existence of all three. Suddenly you will see only celebration will exist, all three will disappear into the celebration. When that happens, that is what I call *nityānanda*, eternal bliss.

Live enlightenment, live eternal bliss, live *nityānanda*. Let you all achieve, radiate, and celebrate eternal bliss, *nityānanda*.



## Arjuna Falters

*1.19 This tumultuous sounding of the conches reverberated in the sky and the earth, and shattered the hearts of the sons of Dhritarashtra.*

*1.20 Then, seated in his chariot, which bore the flag of Hanuman,*

*Arjuna lifted his bow, fixed his arrows and looking at the sons of Dhritarashtra spoke to Krishna.*

*1.21, 1.22 Arjuna said:*

*O Infallible One, please position my chariot between the two armies and let me see the warmongers gathered here with whom I must wage this battle.*

When Bhishma sounded his conch, it invited in return the resounding response of the conches of the Pandava warriors. There is no mention by Sanjaya that Bhishma's conch or the accompanying sounds of drums and trumpets from the Kaurava army caused any concern amongst the Pandava army.

What he says now is different. With the roar of the conches of the Pandava warriors, led by Krishna and Arjuna, Sanjaya says that the hearts of the sons of Dhritarashtra were shattered.

The words used here are significant. He says that the blowing of the conches created vibrations in the sky and upon the earth. The conches of the Pandava princes and the great warriors were not mere musical instruments. They were imbued with divine presence. The sound that they produced when activated by their owners, to whom they were gifted by celestial beings, were filled with great spiritual power. They were in fact *mantra*, or sacred sounds, which created powerful vibrations affecting the environment. That is the uproar Sanjaya was talking about.

In the Hindu epics, one hears of references to weapons called '*astra*'. An *astra* was not a physical weapon. It was a thought or a word that was given enormous power by its creator to destroy. These were *mantra* that created vibrations or energy forces to destroy, the same as a nuclear device. Metaphorically speaking, these are meditative techniques to destroy the *saṁskāras* or engraved memories that resided within the individual.

At a later stage in the Mahabharata war, when the Kaurava army had been routed, one of the remaining warriors, Ashvatthama, son of Drona, in revenge and out of despair, released the *Brahmāstra*, deadliest of all the *astras*. It is said that the *Brahmāstra* was like a nuclear weapon, capable of delivering terrible heat and destruction and which could bring at least 12 years of famine to the land. *Brahmāstra* was a weapon that was obtained from Brahma, the Creator, after severe penances by Ashvatthama.

Arjuna countered the *Brahmāstra* with *Pashupatāstra*, which he had obtained from Shiva. To prevent massive damage to the world, both warriors were advised to retract their weapons. While Arjuna could and did retract his *astra*, Ashvatthama could not. It is said that Krishna received the *Brahmāstra* as his own before it could do any damage.

The conches that the Pandava warriors used were not meant to destroy physically, but they were clearly successful in destroying the fantasies that the Kaurava princes nurtured in their minds. The purpose of sounding conches was to set the stage for the battle and to define its boundaries. They were clearly successful in establishing these boundaries. The Pandava princes and warriors had the comfort of knowing that they were doing what was right, both in their own hearts and minds and in the eyes of God, since they had the support of Krishna Himself. The Kaurava princes were afraid. All that motivated them was greed and envy. They did not have divine purpose as their motivation.

We should remember that Sanjaya was able to see far beyond the superficial responses of individuals on the battlefield. With his powerful *ājñā*, third eye vision, Sanjaya was able to fathom the subconscious and unravel the deep emotions and responses of the warriors. Whatever may have been the perceived reaction of the Kaurava army to the response from the Pandava warriors, Sanjaya concludes that the Kaurava princes were demoralized.

The armies went face-to-face. They were in military formation. The conches had sounded in anticipation. The warriors on both sides were waiting for their commanders to signal the first move in offense.

Arjuna was at the forefront of the Pandava army. He had blown his conch, Devadatta, at the same time as Krishna. Arjuna had taken up his divine bow *Gāṇḍīva*, and had fixed the arrow to the bow. However, instead of releasing the arrow, Arjuna looked at the Kaurava army amassed in front of him, with all the Kaurava princes, his cousins, facing him. He then addressed Krishna, his friend, mentor, divine guide and charioteer.

Arjuna's chariot as we saw earlier was a gift from Agni, the fire god. The chariot flew the flag of Hanuman, the monkey god, son of the wind god Vayu, and the close confidante and disciple of Rama, the incarnation of Vishnu prior to Krishna.

The fire god Agni had requested Krishna's help when Indra, Chief of the demigods threatened to quench his fire with rain. Krishna, accompanied by Arjuna, helped him by offering a forest that Agni could consume. Very pleased with this help, Agni gifted Arjuna with the *Gāṇḍīva* bow, a team of four horses, a chariot and two inexhaustible quivers and armor.

Once, when Bhima was walking through a forest, he found an old frail monkey lying on his path. Bhima asked the monkey to move and give him way. The monkey pleaded that it was too weak to move and suggested Bhima shift him. Bhima first tried to pick up the monkey's tail with his fingers. When the tail would not budge, he tried harder. Even with all his might Bhima, who was known to have the strength of eight thousand elephants, could not move the monkey's tail even an inch! Bhima understood that this was no ordinary monkey, and so paid respects by saluting the monkey, and asked its identity.

The monkey revealed itself as Hanuman, who as another son of the wind god, was in fact Bhima's brother. Hanuman blessed Bhima saying that he would be with the Pandava princes at all times, and that he himself would ride upon Arjuna's flag, on his chariot.

It is said that wherever Hanuman is, Rama is present. Therefore Arjuna is accompanied not only by Krishna, but also by His earlier incarnation Rama! Arjuna and the Pandava princes were twice blessed!

For the first time in this scripture, Arjuna speaks. Arjuna is not the mere hero of Mahabharata in this Gita scripture. He is the embodiment of all humanity. He is *nara*, the human aspect of *Narayana*, Lord Vishnu, who in turn is Krishna. Krishna and Arjuna, as *Narayana* and *nara*, as the Divine and mortal, is the theme that runs throughout Bhagavad Gita and also much of the epic Mahabharata.

‘Infallible One,’ said Arjuna to his friend and mentor, ‘Please take me to a vantage point between the two armies so that I can see for myself who I am fighting with. Let me see who is assembled here on this battlefield. Who has taken up arms to fight, and who are those I must be prepared to fight. Krishna, please show me,’ he says. ‘Show me who I must vanquish.’

Arjuna already knew to the last man, each one who was on that battlefield at Kurukshetra. He had no confusion about whom he was fighting and whom he had to face. All these decisions, the changing of loyalties, the dropouts, all these happened in the days before the war. The negotiations had all come to an end; the lines had been drawn very clearly, even if unwillingly in some cases.

It made no sense at all for Arjuna to ask Krishna at this last minute to show him clearly who he was fighting against. It was as if he was hoping that at the last minute something would occur to change the course of events. If that were to happen, he knew that it could only take place through the grace of his charioteer, friend and guide.

It is as if Arjuna was making a desperate plea to Krishna, ‘Please show me something that I do not know. Show me something that You alone know, Oh Infallible Divine. Take me there, where You will, and show me.’

**Q:** *Swamiji, conches, mantra and astra, all these seem so unreal in this modern age of science and technology. Even the mālā (rosary) with your picture worn by your followers seems to build a cult-like environment. I would like to believe, but much that I have learned is contradictory. Please help me understand.*

This is an honest question. Your question comes from a genuine struggle between what you have been taught to believe and what you are now seeing and hearing, which seems so totally different.

Science and technology are not in opposition to spirituality. Some scientists and technologists may be opposed, but the concepts are not. Einstein, one of the world’s greatest scientists, said that the last step in science is the first step in spirituality. He had discovered the link between matter and energy, and this was being used for destructive purposes. He moved towards spiritual literature for solace and read the *Veda* and *Upaniṣad*.

The very first verse of the first *Upaniṣad* declares:

*īśā vāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*  
All matter arises from energy.

Science and spirituality are congruent when we understand that we do not have to make choices between them. They are not merely parallel paths but congruent and identical. Thousands of years ago enlightened masters knew what is being discovered today. They looked within. Today, scientists look out into the world. That is the difference.

Even fifty years ago people would have laughed if they had been told that atomic and sub-atomic particles behaved differently at different times. This would have been like shaking the foundations of science. Science stated that matter and energy were different and could not occupy the same space at the same time.

This is what you have been taught since childhood, is it not? But this is proven to be untrue by the scientific community today. These scientists, who have been brave enough to challenge that assumption with research, have come forward with data that proves the truth of our physical world. These are the scientists at the forefront of quantum physics and molecular biology, the most advanced frontiers of science and technology today.

Quantum physicists have found for years now that sub-atomic particles do not behave in any predictable manner. You cannot say anything certain about them. The same particle being observed in the same time and space by two different scientists appears to be in a different state depending upon who is watching it!

The Hindu philosopher and enlightened master Adi Shankaracharya said the same thing a thousand years ago. ‘Nothing is real,’ he said. ‘Everything is relative.’ The interaction between the observer, observed and the observation decided what would be perceived. He stated that the truth reveals itself when all three, that is the observing person, the observed object or event and the sense of observation, collapse into one experience, and all three become congruent. That is the only reality, which is the reality beyond illusion, which he termed *māyā*.

*Māyā*, the word sounds exotic. It means ‘that which is not.’ What is not real but appears to be real is *māyā*, illusion.

People laughed at this. ‘I can wound you now. I can kill you now. Is that not real?’ they asked. No, it is not; not from the perspective of reality that the great inner scientists discovered.

You can destroy what you see as my body. Nothing of my energy is destroyed or even affected. Matter moves into the plane of energy. That is all. But as long as you feel bound in the material plane and cannot see or feel beyond that plane, this will not make any sense to you. The same way, it would make no sense to a Newtonian scientist if a quantum physicist were to explain the phenomena of a sub-atomic particle behaving differently to different observers in the same time and space dimension.

To most of us, our conditioning is what is real. What we have learned all these years, what we have been told by others since childhood is real. If the information comes from an authority, we are prepared to trust. It becomes our truth, our value system and belief. These value systems and beliefs collectively are what Shankara and other enlightened *r̥sis* called *saṁskāras*, our conditioned, unconscious memories. Today's neuroscientists accept that this is what drives all our decisions and actions, and not our logical and rational mind as we have been led to believe.

As long as we live with the illusion that we control our lives, we live in suffering. So long as we think that by some logical process we arrive at the decisions we make, based upon which we act, based upon which things happen, not only are we steeped in total ignorance but we suffer deeply as well. Less than ten percent of our mind behaves in a conscious manner that we can follow; the rest of it is the deep unconscious, instinctively pulling us along.

We are driven by an instinct that is primal. The reptilian brain stores memories of a million years and controls us at times of physical danger. We have no control whatsoever over this. We cannot prevent ourselves from fleeing from a danger that seems too great to handle. We cannot prevent ourselves from attacking a danger that seems surmountable. We cannot stop ourselves from getting excited sexually when we perceive the right opportunity to procreate.

Our unconscious brain operates much faster and more reliably than the conscious part. That is the only reason we are still alive. We are alive not because of ourselves, but in spite of ourselves!

Science and technology are tools. As long as we use them as tools, they can enhance our lives. Once we allow them to dictate our lives and our beliefs, we are in danger. We are in far greater danger than if we were to believe a self styled holy man!

Let me explain the significance of conches, *mantra* and *astra*...! One thing you need to understand. All these scriptures and *purāṇa*, the epics, are about truths and

not facts. There is a major difference between these two - truth and fact. Fact is historical and measurable. Facts are bound in three dimensions as well as in time and space. Truth is beyond these dimensions. Truth is about awareness. Truth is about consciousness.

While giving bread and wine, Jesus said, 'Eat my body and drink my blood.' These are truths, absolute truths coming from an enlightened being. These are not facts as you interpret them. They are metaphorical truths from a master who lived beyond His physical boundary, to whom every being, living or non-living, was an extension of His own spirit. If you do not understand that, and make His words into a ritual, it becomes meaningless as it has become today.

We have lost the key to metaphorical truths. That is why rituals that are steeped in truth have degenerated into superstitions and mechanical repetitive actions. If you were to eat every morsel as if you were consuming the energy of Christ and drink every sip of water as the energy of Christ, you would never need to step into a church in your life again. You will be steeped in Christ consciousness. You would be another Christ!

That is what truths are about. The sound of the conches of these great warriors, especially Krishna and Arjuna, was not mere sound. These were cosmic vibrations, vibrations that keep the universe alive and functional. That was the purpose of blowing these conches in temples and at prayer. They help us resonate with the energy vibrations of the universe. They are meant to tune us to the vibration of pure cosmic energy.

So it is with *mantras*, the chants with sacred syllables. The sounds of the *mantras* create vibrations within you that help you get in tune with the cosmic energy. You need not even understand the meaning of the chants. However, the pronunciation and rhythm are important. They can quickly raise your energy, and a number of scientific experiments conducted for many years now have substantiated this. Your health - physically, psychologically and emotionally, improve and your material life also improves as a result.

*Astra*, the mystical weapons, actually existed. These weapons were not physical or material. They were powerfully focused thoughts of a trained master who could create and destroy using the energy of these thoughts. The power of intention is now a widely researched field and dozens of books have been written based on scientific experiments in this field. Hindu *yogis* as well as Chinese and Japanese masters have shown that by merely focusing their thoughts, they can throw a person many feet away and can move objects to any distance. Parlor tricks such as



bending spoons with the power of thought are an extension of this, and millions of people have experienced such powers.

Can you guarantee that a person will continue to breathe in the next moment? You can state a probability, but never the certainty. That is what intelligent scientists have found today. They say that you can only talk about the probability of an event even in this material world, never with certainty.

The whole concept of what we were taught as science has now been turned around. Science is not about guaranteed repeatability. It is about the probability of repeatability. That is all. A low probability of repetition does not mean that an event is not scientific. Even if it happens once and we are able to verify its authenticity, it is no longer a fantasy, it is a scientific reality.

You asked about the *mālā*, the necklace. These *mālā* carry the cosmic energy. They are like batteries that recharge you when you need the energy. There is no need to blindly believe this. We can use scientific instruments and show that they radiate energy. When a person wearing these *mālā* meditates, he or she charges these batteries further. These are inexhaustible sources of psychic energy supply to a person. You need not believe in them; they will still work. They will heal you.

When a person is in tune with me, has faith in me, specifically if that person has been initiated by me, they can communicate with me through the *mālā*. I call the *mālā* my cell phone! Any number of people will testify to this. Again, this is not blind belief. There is scientific evidence to back such phenomena of thought exchange. They call it Zero Point Field in Quantum Physics. My *mālā* is just an instrument that makes this happen.

The *mālā* is a psychic defense. In many cultures around the world, people believe that others can harm them through their thoughts, black magic, etc. Yes, this can happen when your psychic defenses are down, and when you allow someone to enter your psychic field. My *mālā* is your defense.

What I am about to tell you now is a real life incident, in a Western country.

In 2005 and 2006, a number of people from the French colony of Guadeloupe, in the West Indies started coming to our classes. Many French people came for the discourses and started wearing the *mālā*.

A divorced lady who was living with her young son reported this incident in France. One night she woke up from sleep and it was as if someone was telling her to put on her clothes. She put on a dress and went back to sleep.

She woke up to the sight of a man holding a knife standing at her bedside. Instinctively she held up the *mālā* in defense. This man tried to stab her, but he could not move. He seemed suddenly paralyzed!

Meanwhile, the son woke up and came into the room. Seeing him, the intruder turned to him and wounded him. As they were struggling, the mother once again held up her *mālā*, and the intruder was paralyzed again. Eventually the intruder jumped out of an open window. The lady reported this to the police.

After a day or two, the police called her to identify a person who may have been her attacker. When she went to identify the person, and he saw her, he cowered and complained to the police that she was a witch with supernatural powers and he did not want to mess around with her again!

The *mālā* is made from special organic material. *rudrākṣa mālā* is strung with *rudrākṣa* - the seed of a tree that grows in Nepal and Indonesia. The word *rudrākṣa* means 'tears of Rudra, or Shiva.' From time immemorial these seeds have been prized in India and parts of Asia as sacred and healing. The other type of *mālā* is the red sandalwood *mālā*. Both of these are energizing and good for your mind-body system, especially since they have passed through the hands of an enlightened master. They work on your throat and heart energy centers, the *visuddhi* and *anāhata cakras*, which means they work on your thyroid and thymus glands. Your growth and immune functions are boosted.

In recent times I have also been giving energized copper bracelets for protection. These too are for physical, psychological and psychic protection. Made of specially treated copper, they benefit many who have arthritic and rheumatic complaints. I am sure that over time, all of these will be scientifically validated. They are based on *vedic* principles, which are scientific in nature.

You mentioned cults. Cults are led by fear and greed. Though they claim to be alternatives to other institutions, cults themselves are bondages. And although my form is worshipped in all our ashrams, if you know our institution well enough, you know that at every level there are strict injunctions to move away from my form into the formless. All our meditation techniques and teachings are based on the formless. People are free to move in and out as they want. The form is used as the first step in your journey.

I always tell people, 'Once you have come into the ashram gates, you are always with me. Whenever you wish to leave physically, you are free to go. You will go

with my blessings. Many people who have left for one reason or another will tell you that. They come and go, but they always come again with joy to see me. This cannot happen in a cult; you are bound hand and foot.

Each of you has a path. You have your own path to awareness and liberation. Those in whose path I play a role seek me out and I am there for them. Sometimes things turn out differently and even if I am your master, this may not be the right time. So you may move away. I see that happen with regret, only because I know that your spirit longs for that liberation. It will suffer as it leaves the body. But there is little I can do. Your transformation is in your hands.

There are so many Westerners who come to the ashram. Why should they come from all over the world while many Indians and Hindus, far more familiar with the background of my teachings, hesitate? This is not because Westerners are gullible. They come because there is a connection; there is a spiritual connection that brings them. I am here to fulfill and liberate them so that they need not suffer another birth again.

We provide free boarding, lodging and all facilities to those interested in spending a year with us learning about the *vedic* culture. If you do not find it a good fit, it is your choice to leave. There is no pressure either to come in or to stay.

All I teach you is to experience the truth for yourself, and not to simply believe anyone's words, even mine. When you experience the truth, it is your truth. That is the truth that liberates you and no one can ever take away from you.



## Intelligence Questions

*1.23 Let me see those who have come here to fight,*

*Wishing to please the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra.*

*1.24 Sanjaya said:*

*O descendant of Bharata, being thus addressed by Arjuna,*

*Krishna then drew up the fine chariot in the midst of both armies.*

Arjuna starts out on a challenging note. He says he would like to see all those who had assembled to fight him, in support of the evil minded Duryodhana. Accordingly, Krishna drew up the chariot between the two armies so that Arjuna could have a good look at all those who had gathered.

Arjuna is being called Gudakesha in this verse, the one who has transcended sleep, or the need to sleep. Sleep, here, also refers to the unconscious mind. All our *saṁskāras*, the embedded memories, our value systems and the beliefs that drive our actions, reside in our unconscious. Arjuna is being referred to here as one who has conquered his *saṁskāras*, as a result of his total surrender to Krishna.

Krishna has been called Hrishikesha, one who controls the senses. The relationship between Krishna and Arjuna is the highest form of interaction between the Divine and the human.

You see, for one who is caught in the sleep of unconscious living, this world of illusion, *māyā*, appears utterly real. But the enlightened master has awakened to the level of pure consciousness and knows that this world is just another type of dream. When the disciple is able to completely trust the master's senses that this world is illusion, and not his own senses that give the idea that this world is real and is the source of his happiness, then the surrender is total. Krishna's senses

were controlled in the sense He knew that what He experienced through them was not the source of His happiness and therefore He didn't run after sensual pleasures for His fulfillment.

When approaching the Divine or one's master, the ultimate step is one of complete surrender. This surrender happens in three stages. At the first level it is an intellectual surrender - the intellectual acceptance of what is divine, what the master represents and what he means to you. A true seeker reaches this stage when he encounters the real master destined for him. The seeker sees in the master, qualities he has been searching for, and answers to questions that have long arisen in his mind.

At this stage of intellectual surrender, when the disciple meets the master, questions start dying down. It is as if answers come to one's mind even before questions happen.

Questions can never be answered. They are a reflection of one's internal violence, the violence of one's ego, wishing to prove one's control over another person. If we analyze our own questions, we will realise that we ask the questions only to tell the other person that we know something.

Rarely are our questions like that of an innocent child, who asks out of curiosity. A child may ask, 'Why is the sky blue?' An adult would rarely ask such a question, unless he is a wise scientist whose curiosity transcends his knowledge base and he truly seeks to know.

Intellectual surrender to the master replaces questions with doubts. Doubts are not violent like questions. They do not arise from the ego. They arise from a genuine need to know and to understand. Doubt and faith are two sides of the same coin. One cannot develop faith in one's master without having doubts about him. Despite his high level of surrender, one does see Arjuna initially in this state of questioning as well, perhaps as a lesson to us ordinary mortals. Arjuna progresses during Gita from the stage of questioning, to the higher stage of intellectual surrender and doubts. Ultimately, we must move beyond both doubt and faith to a deep trust in the master, recognizing that everything the master expresses is for our liberation.

At the next level, one reaches the state of emotional surrender. From *śāstras* one moves to *stotras*. One moves from the head to the heart. It is like coming home when the heart surrenders. The person feels a deep connection with the master. One does not have to make an effort to remember the master. It is impossible to

forget Him. His memory brings tears to one's eyes, tears of gratitude that are impossible to hide.

Ramakrishna says so beautifully, 'When thinking of the Divine or the master, if you have tears streaming down your cheeks, be very sure that this is your last birth.'

Emotional surrender leads one close to liberation. It brings you home.

At the final level, there is the surrender of the senses. One truly realizes Hrishikesha and gives up one's distorted sense of reality and embraces the truth of absolute reality that the master and every enlightened sage have expressed. Arjuna is at that level of surrender and through the progression of the Gita, layers of Arjuna's surrender peel off.

Arjuna calls Duryodhana evil minded. This was to paint a contrast of his own state of mind to that of Duryodhana, the Kaurava princes and the Kaurava warriors. When one's mind is filled with greed, lust, envy and fear, there is a single-minded focus on the potential material benefits of these negative and evil emotions. There was no confusion in Duryodhana's mind as to what he should do. His objectives were clear - do away with the Pandava princes and usurp the entire kingdom, that's all.

Duryodhana was like an animal, operating out of instinct. Unlike Arjuna, he was not an intelligent man and did not suffer from doubts and guilt. Animals suffer no guilt. They do what comes to them naturally. They do not consider hunting their prey as something that needs discussion. If they are hungry, they hunt, kill and eat. So it is with Duryodhana. He needs power, and whatever might be the means to achieve that power he will employ without any reservation.

A human being has a level of consciousness higher than that of animals. A human can discriminate between right and wrong and has the free will to act based on such awareness. When a human behaves the way Duryodhana does, he is in the unconscious and unaware state.

With such an unaware and unconscious mind, Duryodhana and his allies did not suffer from any doubts. Mired totally in the darkness of unawareness, these Kaurava warriors followed Duryodhana blindly, unaware that the person they followed was blind himself.

Arjuna, on the other hand, is in turmoil. As Krishna brings the chariot to a stop between the two armies, in a metaphoric sense, He brings Arjuna's mind to a steady state.

Duryodhana is in darkness. He is operating out of the instincts of an animal. His moves are totally unconscious, driven completely by his *saṁskāras*. In a sense, he is not in control of himself, his *saṁskāras* control him. So strong is his delusion that the wise counsel of the few who told him that the path he is following is one of self destruction, falls on deaf ears.

Arjuna, on the other hand, is in a twilight zone. Unlike Duryodhana, Arjuna has become aware of his *saṁskāras*, and is working to free himself from their bondage. However, he is not in the zone of light yet.

The conflict between Arjuna and Duryodhana is the conflict that all humans face within themselves. It is a conflict between their deep unconscious desires driven by their *saṁskāras* and the potential awareness of their consciousness. Which part wins depends on one's ability to surrender to the superconscious Divine or the master.

As long as one is in darkness, one does not miss light. A person born blind has no idea what sight is, what light is and what he is missing. Whatever he may think he is missing is based on what others tell him, not because of any experience of his own.

However, someone who has been born with sight and subsequently lost it would miss it. He would miss the light. He would regret the darkness where he finds himself. He would be afraid of that darkness, which a person born blind would never fear because that would have always been his experience.

Arjuna is in the state of a person who has had sight and has now lost it. He was an intelligent man, but suddenly wondered whether what he was doing might be wrong and evil. So he is disturbed.

Duryodhana on the other hand has a mind that is always in darkness. He has never experienced true intelligence or awareness. Therefore, words like 'immoral' or 'unethical' would make no sense to him.

***Q: You say Gita acquires the authority of the scriptures since it is delivered by Krishna, the perfect incarnation, poornavataar. Other scriptures such as the Veda. were revealed to sages. Is there historical proof that Krishna was God incarnate?***

A good question. It is a question that naturally arises in a rational mind. If I were to say that there was some proof or other, the next question will be to show proof that God exists. Only if I can prove that God exists can I prove that Krishna too is God.

Our entire belief in God or its absence is based on some assumptions we make about God. We cast God in our own image. Whatever we do, it is an identity that we create. It is a hallucination, it is a fantasy; it is not an experience.

Since different people have different fantasies and some have fantasies that they themselves are God, there is this continuous argument about whether God exists or not. If some people agree that God exists, then they argue about their God being better, faster and stronger than the other persons' God.

Sometimes I feel it is better that people do not believe in God! There will be far less violence and bloodshed on this planet. The vast majority of wars originated in religious conflicts. Religion is the breeding ground for terrorists today. At least atheists do not wage war. They only argue.

Most of you have only a concept of God. You are sure of your own identity. At least you are able to convincingly articulate about who you think you are. However, when it comes to God, your idea of God is based on your conditioning, belief systems, culture and environment.

This is a powerful unconscious belief. It is difficult to change this belief. For some, God is a bearded old soul with kind eyes. To some there is no form at all and it is sacrilegious to cast Him in any form. To billions of Hindus it is Shiva, Krishna, Vishnu or Kali, with definitive forms and attributes.

Buddha denied God. He went beyond the concept of God. For hundreds of years, the Bodhi tree alone represented Buddha. The ultimate irony is that his followers turned him into God!

For most of you, God is a concept, but concept of 'you' is real. To me, I, this form, is unreal, but God is reality! Every movement I make is sanctioned by that ultimate energy. So I have no doubt in telling you that God exists and that Krishna is indeed God. I have seen Him, so I know.

I invite every one of you to come and experience God with me. It is a promise and not easily given.

I have come down with the technology and the compassion and the intelligence, the *sūtras*, the *stotras* and the *shāstras* to make what I said happen for you. It is a highly refined process and I know that it is successful.

God is not the prerogative of any one religion. You do not have to be part of one religious belief or another to be a believer. God belongs to all, by whatever name you wish to call Him and in whatever form you wish to see Him. Whether you are Christian, Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist, the experiencing of God will make



you a better Christian, a better Muslim, a better Hindu or a better Buddhist. None of you will be converted from your own religion into another.

The concept of God should not be about conversion. Only those who are insecure in their own beliefs about God would want to force their beliefs on others. No confident religion would want to change someone else's belief system.

A while ago I met with a preacher in Mumbai, India in an inter-religious conference. I told him proudly about the programs that we run and how it attracts hundreds of people. He listened politely and said that the programs that he runs usually have thousands attending them! Later during the conference, he became quite friendly and confided in me a number of his problems. I gave him some advice and techniques. They seem to have worked because he sought me out towards the end of the conference and thanked me. One of the problems he expressed was that he was himself unsure of what he preached to others. I had asked him in surprise, 'How do you then manage to convince them if you yourself are not sure?' His answer was revealing. He said, 'When so many people come to listen to me and pay respect to me, I become convinced that whatever I am saying must be right!'

It is quite easy to brainwash yourself or be brainwashed and still continuously carry the guilt of not having understood.

God cannot be proved by logic. He transcends logic. You need to lose your mind to find Him!

Therefore, any amount of rational arguments will only warm up the environment.

A small story:

There was once an atheist and a believer in a village who were constantly fighting. The villagers got fed up and told them to sort it out between themselves, once and for all.

The two argued for days. At the end of the argument the atheist declared that he was convinced that there indeed was a God.

Before the villagers recovered from this shock, the believer stood up and said, 'No, I don't agree. I am now fully convinced that there is no God!'

You asked whether Krishna was real. Yes, He was and is! The Bhagavad Gita did not get scriptural authority on the basis of any proof that Krishna was God. Gita was acknowledged as a scripture of the highest order because of the

indisputable truths that it laid out. It did not matter who delivered the dialogue. Anyone who did that delivered it from Krishna consciousness. Therefore, He was Krishna!

A fervent group of Krishna devotees once cornered me after a discourse and heatedly asked me, 'You delivered such a profound discourse about on Gita. However, we understand that you worship Shiva! How is this possible? You are committing sacrilege.'

I said to them that Krishna and Shiva are the same Energies, as are other enlightened masters and incarnations.

They were not satisfied. They said I should desist from worshipping Shiva.

I asked them, 'Have you read the Gita?'

They said, 'No, what is it?'

I told them that after the Mahabharata war, when Arjuna was alone with Krishna, he asked Krishna, 'Krishna, I have forgotten what you advised me during the war. Can you tell me again, please?'

Krishna said, 'Oh, you forgot Arjuna! I too have forgotten!'

Arjuna asked in surprise, 'Krishna, how is that possible? You are the greatest master of them all. How can you forget the truths you yourself have established?'

Krishna says simply, 'While delivering the Gita, I was in the ultimate consciousness. I was *Parabrahma* Krishna, God incarnate. Now, I am Vasudeva Krishna, the human son of Vasudeva, and your friend. So, I do not remember it now.'

What Krishna once again repeated to satisfy Arjuna is what is called 'Anu Gita'.

I told them that at the level of the *Parabrahman*, the ultimate consciousness that we term as Shiva, Krishna, Buddha and so on, are all the same energy.

One of the elders in the group told me, 'Sir, we thought you were such a young person and therefore probably misguided. However, now you have taught us the truth!'

There is no need for historical proof that Krishna existed or that Gita is considered a scripture because Krishna was God. Gita is Krishna consciousness. Any one who delivered Gita was Krishna!



## Arjuna's Dilemma

1.25 to 1.30

*In the presence of Bhishma, Drona and other rulers of the world,  
Hrishikesha said, Partha, behold all the Kurus who are assembled here.*

*There Arjuna could see within the armies of both parties,  
His elders, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, cousins, sons, grandsons  
And friends, as well as his fathers-in-law and well-wishers.*

*When Arjuna, the son of Kunti, saw all these friends and relatives present  
there,*

*He was overwhelmed with deep pity and said:*

*Krishna, seeing my friends and relatives present before me, eager to wage war,  
I feel my limbs trembling, my mouth drying, and my hair standing on end.*

*My bow, Gandiva, slips from my hands, and my skin burns.*

*I am unable to stand here any longer.*

*I am forgetting myself, and my mind reels.*

*I foresee only evil omens, O killer of the Kesi demon.*

Krishna parked the chariot between the two armies and said to Arjuna, 'Here are the people you wished to see.'

There, in front of Arjuna are his friends and relatives. Krishna pulls no punches here. Arjuna wanted to see those who were about to fight him and die, and

Krishna, with no mercy at all, showed him that these were Arjuna's near and dear ones.

Krishna Himself was related to Arjuna. Kunti, Arjuna's mother, also known as Pritha, was Krishna's aunt, sister of Krishna's father Vasudeva; so He addresses Arjuna here as Partha, the son of Pritha, emphasizing their relationship. Krishna is also referred to in Gita as Parthasarathy, the charioteer of Partha, Arjuna.

Assembled in front of Arjuna were compatriots of his father Pandu, grandfathers and great grandfathers such as Bhishma, his own teachers such as Drona and Kripa, uncles such as Shakuni, brothers and cousins as all the Kaurava princes were, friends and well wishers. He knew every one of them. At one time or another, each of them had been an object of affection and respect to Arjuna. Now, they were part of this enemy army.

The theme of Gita is the story of Arjuna's dilemma and its resolution by Krishna.

The expression of Arjuna's dilemma starts here.

As a warrior, as a *kṣatriya*, Arjuna was used to killing in battle. He was no stranger to death and violence. As long as his mind accepted the fact that those who faced him were his enemies and therefore deserved to be killed, Arjuna had no difficulty in carrying out the execution.

However, those whom he saw in front of him now were not enemies as he had imagined, as his mind would expect, but instead people with whom he had shared common bonds over the years. These were people whom he had regarded with love and affection. They were his relatives, people who actually were like his father, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, sons and grandsons, tied to him with bonds of blood. Many others were his friends with whom he had previously enjoyed bonds of loyalty and kinship.

Arjuna's dilemma was not one of nonviolence, *ahimsā*. As a warrior, as a *kṣatriya*, this word had no place in his dictionary. His dilemma was one of violence, violence born out of his ego, his identity. He could kill people he did not identify with, but he could not bear to kill those whom he could relate with himself in one way or another. The bonds of family were far stronger than Arjuna had imagined. The bonds of family that were rooted in his ego, and to cut these bonds was to destroy himself. This was Arjuna's dilemma.

The great war of Mahabharata was not merely about the fight between the hundred Kaurava princes and the five Pandava princes. It was not just about good and evil and the fight between the two. It was the war waged within the mind of man, *nara*, represented here by Arjuna, while coming to terms with what was perceived as good and what was perceived as evil.

What follows now is a bunch of fantasies that Arjuna's mind weaves in an attempt to justify his dilemma. It is what the human mind conjures up time and again as its projection of the unconscious *saṁskāras*, trying to justify its actions.

Sanjaya says that Arjuna was overwhelmed with pity. Some translate this as compassion.

Compassion, true compassion, which is the hallmark of an enlightened being, is non-discriminatory; it does not differentiate. To the truly compassionate person, the whole world, of both living and nonliving beings, is an extension of his own self. Anything that hurts any object around such a person would hurt him, and he too would feel the pain.

However, what Arjuna experienced here upon seeing his kinsmen was not of that noble kind. Arjuna's emotion was discriminatory. He felt pity only because they were his kinsmen, only because he identified with them.

As I mentioned earlier this was not compassion born out of *ahiṁsā*, nonviolence, but pity born out of *hiṁsā*, violence.

Arjuna's emotions arose from his ego.

True compassion arises from a state of absence of ego, from a state of no-mind and no-thought, where the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' have disappeared. True compassion is a state of bliss, one of true surrender to the Universe.

When the individual self merges with the universal Self, true compassion happens out of an awareness of the cosmic consciousness and the awareness that one is part of that *Brahman*.

Arjuna's pity arose out of fear, fear of losing his identity, his ego. Arjuna was afraid, mortally afraid. He claimed that his throat was parched, his hair was standing on edge and his divine bow was slipping from his sweaty hands. If one did not know Arjuna better, one would have considered him a coward.

Arjuna was no coward. He had no fear for his own physical safety. He was not concerned that he might be injured or that he might die. As a warrior of warriors,

these feelings were beneath him. But, Arjuna was afraid. He was afraid of breaking social and ethical laws. His values and beliefs, his subconscious memories, his *samskāras*, told him that what he was doing was wrong and unacceptable. So powerful was this feeling that he was reeling, quivering, dazed and unable to think or function.

Can something like this really happen? Can a hero lose his composure and exhibit the physical symptoms of a frightened coward? A true hero to whom death is play, who is trained from childhood by the greatest of masters not only in the control of his body but of his mind as well?

Arjuna's situation shows how the mind can play games with the best of us, how the *samskāras* can take over the mind in so powerful a manner without our being even aware of it.

Arjuna was frightened that he would be held responsible for the death of his kinsmen, people who were father, grandfather and other such important figures to him. He was afraid that even if others did not blame him, he would suffer the guilt and regret for his actions for the rest of his life.

So great was this fear of potential guilt, that it drove Arjuna into behaving like a coward. All he could foresee was disaster and evil; disaster to him and his clan; disaster to his reputation, and material destruction all around him.

At another, far deeper level, Arjuna was terrified of his own destruction. The moment one starts identifying with kinsmen, family, friends and relatives, it is a material identification. It is an identification born out of possession. This identification arises from one's ego, from the feeling of 'I' and 'mine'.

Possession is born of attachment, and leads to attachment as well. There can be no feeling of possessing something unless one is attached to it.

People speak of attachment, liking and love. All these are born out of and valid only as long as a sense of possession exists. The moment the object of love turns around and displays independence and unwillingness to be possessed, the liking and the love disappear.

Possession arises out of our survival need, from our *mūlādhāra cakra*, an energy center located at the base of the spine. It is a primal feeling that yokes us to mother Earth. Out of the need for possession, feelings of lust, greed and anger arise. Often what one cannot possess, one wants to destroy.

'What I cannot have, let no one have,' we often feel.

Possession leads to violence.

It is also the deep-rooted desire for possessions, the feeling of 'mine', that gives rise to your identity 'I'. Please understand that the need to possess does not stem from your identity. It is the other way around. 'Mine' leads to 'I', not 'I' to 'mine'. This is why you cannot eliminate your identity till you renounce your attachment to all your desires and possessions. You need to get rid of the 'mine' first. Only then the 'I' disappears.

Arjuna is in this mood and frame of mind. It strikes him at this eleventh hour, at the moment of waging war, that what he is about to destroy are his own possessions. These are his own kinsmen and part of his own identity. If he were to destroy them he will be destroying a part of his own self. By destroying those who are akin to his father, grandfather, son, brother, uncle and friend, he is effectively destroying his own mind-body system.

It is true that when someone dear to us dies, a part of our mind-body system dies with them. Arjuna was aware of this. He knew that the destruction of so many of his near and dear ones, his kinsmen, would take a massive toll on him. It would be akin to committing suicide.

Arjuna's dilemma was an existential one. What is the point of eliminating others, if it results in one's own elimination? It is a dilemma born out of partial understanding, a peek into the truth of collective consciousness. If Arjuna were to be as unaware as Duryodhana, this doubt would have never entered his mind. Were he enlightened as Krishna was, the answer would have been obvious. Arjuna was in between, hence his dilemma.

Why should I destroy myself? What for? These are the questions that naturally follow this line of reasoning. Arjuna was far wiser than many modern philosophers in posing this as a doubt, without venturing any answers.

Many philosophers have concluded that there is no meaning to life when they encountered similar doubts. Since they did not have the humility of Arjuna, or the guidance of a Krishna, they provided their own answers created out of logical reasoning. Their reasoning had no experiential backing. Hence, they were wrong.

Arjuna is undergoing a process of transformation. He started off in this war with the basic assumptions of the *kṣatriya* codes of conduct. When challenged, a *kṣatriya* must fight; that is his code of honor, as with the samurai. Arjuna had no compunctions in doing this as he was brought up in this belief system.

However, the problem was that Arjuna was a thinking man. Unlike Duryodhana, or his own brother Bhima, he was not a thoughtless man. This ability to think, to be aware, was what had got him into trouble now. Doubts assailed him. 'Am I really doing the right thing? Am I not destroying myself and all that I stand for when I wage this war against my own people?'

Arjuna had become a seeker of Truth. He was no longer satisfied with what he had imbibed all these years - the śāstras, the stotras and the sūtras. He wished to go beyond. He questioned them, as he had doubts. He was in a dilemma. *Arjuna Vishāda Yoga*, is the name given to this first chapter of Gita. *Vishāda* can mean many things in Sanskrit - grief, sorrow, despondency, despair, depression, dilemma and such. Here what we see is the dilemma that Arjuna was in, not knowing whether what he had been taught all his life, and what he had believed to be true, was really true after all.

The transformation that Krishna leads him to over the eighteen chapters is the revelation of truth to Arjuna, and to all humanity.

Krishna is referred to by many names thus far. Some of them and their meanings are included here.

The word 'Krishna' itself refers to His dark blue color, the color of the sky, and as infinite as the sky. It also means existence and bliss, *sat chit ānanda* and 'who provides salvation to those who surrender to Him.'

Keshava, the name by which he is called in the above verses, refers to the fact that He destroyed the demon Keshin. It also refers to his beautiful hair. The embodiment in Him of the holy trinity of the Hindu tradition (the Sanskrit words *K* referring to Brahma, *A* to Vishnu and *Īśā* to Shiva) is another meaning of this name.

Govinda is a combination of *go* referring to all living beings and *vinda* which means knower, Krishna being the ultimate knower of the mind, body and being of all living creatures.

**Q: Swamiji, You explained that Duryodhana acted out of blindness and Arjuna from partial awareness. Yet, if Arjuna were to enter the fight and kill his kinsmen, there would be no difference between him and Duryodhana. You yourself pointed out that rights and wrongs are merely our conditioning. Then in what manner is Arjuna better than Duryodhana?**



Here is an excellent question. It is correct that Duryodhana was like a blind man and therefore rights and wrongs had no meaning to him. He is at one end of a spectrum in his total unawareness. He is in the same state as an enlightened being in not distinguishing between right and wrong. But, here the similarity ends.

Arjuna, on the other hand, is an average human being, conditioned to accept the reality of right and wrong as taught to him by society. Moreover, he has deep faith in the code of the *kṣatriya*, which commits him to fair play, justice and so on.

We differentiate between two individuals based on our own conditioning and judgment. Each individual is unique. No human being and no being, living or inanimate, can be evil. Existence, which is compassion itself, cannot produce something that is out of its character.

When we are born and as young children, we are able to see people without differentiation. If you watch a very young child, you will see that the child will go towards anyone, whether that person is holding a gun or a candy. It is immaterial to the child, as the child operates from curiosity. The child makes no judgment.

However, as the child grows up, it is 'educated'; educated by its elders that certain things are right or wrong, safe or dangerous. The child may be taught that people who come from a background similar to its own parents are good people, and people who come from a dissimilar background are bad people. A child does not differentiate; an adult differentiates and excludes.

Good and bad, right and wrong, likes and dislikes, love and hatred arise out of differentiation. All these are adult qualities. All these are qualities that each generation imbibes from another with the assumed notion that it helps that generation and culture be safe.

Yet, crime records show that people known to the victim commit the vast majority of rapes, murders and other violent crimes. That is why the first suspect in the murder of a person is always the spouse. This is reality. Strangers are much less likely to harm you. Your own people do. Yet xenophobia, fear of strangers, is built into the human psyche.

Part of this xenophobia arises from our animal roots and tribal roots. Animals and tribes exist by grouping together for survival. Their very survival, the survival of the fittest, depends on how well they resist intruders. Ironically, this behavior has been scientifically shown to be dangerous to the long-term survival of any race. Inbreeding decreases the chances of survival. It does not enhance it.

In this day and age, where the entire globe is so well connected, no man can live as an island. No group or race or country can isolate itself from others and expect to survive and thrive. We have to learn to live with one another. Cooperation and interdependence are the factors best suited to survival and growth in this age, not violent competition and conflicts.

Studies at the cellular level have shown that cells like to link to other cells; they do not isolate themselves. Nature's way of evolution was not by competition and survival of the fittest, but by coming together and sharing. Darwin was wrong in that part of his theory that states that a species survives through conflict and elimination.

Whatever we apply as differentiated standards to those whom we do not know, we also apply to those whom we know. We develop a common standard based on our experience, and those who abide by it are good and those who do not are bad. This is developing a base of the lowest common denominator. Anything that is developed as averages or lowest common denominators will contribute to degeneration and not enhancement.

If you keep your head in boiling water and your feet on ice, your average temperature may be near the normal temperature for a human being, but then you won't be alive for long. We have been taught to think in terms of averages in everything. The average family size is 4.2. Does this make any sense in real terms? No!

Our unconscious is packed with emotion-filled memories, *samskāras*, which drive our decisions and actions and cause us to create separation and isolation. We would be shocked to know that there is no rationality to these decisions. Neither our senses nor our mind are dependable. Their judgments are questionable.

You may say, 'That is all that we have. What else can we use?'

That is not all that we have. At the highest level of expression, we are pure intelligence. Intuition is available to us at every moment, but we have not been taught this and so we never draw upon this innate intelligence. We choose to rely upon our senses and our mind. The pleasures that our senses seem to provide us from the external world are our sustenance, and we are so addicted to them that we do not turn our attention inwards. We don't know how to, so much so that the prospect of just sitting with ourselves is actually frightening!

Your fundamental nature is one of awareness and intelligence. That is your core, your very center. But your mind is attracted through your senses towards peripheral pleasures, which are transient. From time to time, you realize that the periphery is not your real home and you move towards the center. The periphery attracts you again. So, you oscillate. You are never at the center for long.

You become eccentric!

Duryodhana operates near the periphery, coming very rarely towards his center. He is controlled by his senses and his mind. He has no control over them. Arjuna, on the other hand, tries to move to the center as much as he can. He tries to control his mind and his senses. This is the difference between the two. Who is better and who is worse? Who can pass any judgment?

If you were to ask for my advice, of course I shall say, be like Arjuna. Arjuna is a seeker. He is a disciple and he is working to drop his ego. But until he reaches the center, there is no fundamental difference between him and Duryodhana.

Like Arjuna and Duryodhana, every one of you is maintaining the same distance from enlightenment. Attending a few discourses, reading many books and even understanding some of them intellectually is not the experience of enlightenment itself. Both these warriors are in darkness, but just to different degrees, that's all.

Existence does not differentiate between saints and sinners as we classify them. Existence does not care. When you turn your attention inward and you are at the center of your being, you become Existence; you become enlightened. I always say that enlightenment is your natural state; it is not something that you need to work towards. You just have to be, that is all.

You may be Duryodhana or Arjuna. It makes no difference!

I have said time and again: I needed to experiment with ten thousand keys before I could find the right key to open the door to the truth. I now offer you that key so that you do not need to struggle.

It does make some difference in the path when you are an Arjuna. Not because you are closer to the center instead of the periphery, but because you are guided by a master. The redeeming factor for Arjuna was that Krishna was his master. Nothing else. It is Arjuna's surrender to Krishna that makes the difference. Nothing else.

Do not try to judge Arjuna and Duryodhana. There is nothing to differentiate and judge. But act like Arjuna, if you can. Become a seeker. Seek a master. Your path will be easier. You can learn from life or you can learn from the master. With the master it is faster, easier and more compassionate for you.



## Rigors Of Conditioning

*1.31 I do not see how any good can come from killing my own kinsmen in this battle, nor can I, my dear Krishna, desire any subsequent victory, kingdom or happiness.*

*1.32 What use is kingdom, pleasures or even life, Krishna?*

*1.33 Those for whose sake we seek kingdoms, enjoyment and happiness*

*Now are arrayed in this battlefield ready to lose their lives and wealth.*

*1.34, 1.35 Even if I am about to be slain by my teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and all relatives,*

*I would not like to slay them even to gain control of all three worlds.*

*Why then, Madhusudana, would I wish to kill them for control of this earth?*

Arjuna now started developing his theme in detail. He started expressing his doubts with clarity. One may ask, 'How can such doubts be clear?'

Doubts need to be clear if they are to be resolved. Unclear doubts lead only to more confusion. Unintelligent beings have unclear doubts. Arjuna's doubts were precise.

How could he seek happiness through destruction of his kinsmen, he asked. How could any good come out of this action? How could he desire power, possessions and pleasures through such action? And if he did gain those things as a result of killing his family, of what use would such a life be to him?

Though Arjuna was in a dilemma, it was a dilemma born out of intelligence, not out of ignorance.

Arjuna had been taught all his life to seek power, possessions and pleasures, and he had done it. Up to this point, he had not come across a single situation where the cost of acquiring these had seemed to be greater than the accruing profit, the resulting enjoyment. Perhaps he had never bothered to evaluate the cost and benefits.

For the first time in his life, he has encountered a situation that forces him to evaluate his options.

‘Do I forge ahead and destroy what is dear to me so that I get more power and possibly more pleasure?’ he asks. What a fundamental question, one that each one of us should ask ourselves. How often do we go behind activities that promise us more material benefits, even though we know that these may in some way damage our life or the lives of those we care about?

Life becomes mechanical for most people. Rather than live in the spontaneity of the present, our past is vividly remembered and it is used to forget the present. If the past event was one of sorrow, we try to avoid it in future. If the past event was joyful, we try to replicate it. We try to avoid regret and guilt in the future, and embrace happiness. The problem is that life is not so predictable. Yet we try to control it as if it is. The bigger problem is that we are so conditioned by our behavioral patterns, that in spite of all precautions, we keep making the same mistakes. Our *saṁskāras*, our unconscious, ensures this.

Very few of us stop to think and question the purpose and value of our actions. With few exceptions, we are taught how to live and what to do with our lives, first by our families and later by society. We do our best to seek fulfillment and make a contribution in the way that we have learned. Most often we are so busy just trying to keep up with our personal and professional commitments, that it never occurs to us to ask ourselves whether we are truly fulfilled. Our lives become a constant series of ‘What next, what next?’

For example, as youngsters we think, ‘As soon as I get out of my parents’ house and into college, I will be happy.’ When that is accomplished, our minds immediately rush to the next goal, ‘As soon as I graduate and get a good job I will be happy.’ Once that is done, it is marriage, home, children, vacation. On and on it goes, until we have all the things that we want but not the sustained satisfaction for which we worked. Invariably we realise only in our old age that something is wrong in the way we worked.

It takes a lot of courage to stop and question our lives, our actions and society's plan for us. It takes inner fortitude to say to the world, 'Stop, I want to get off; I want to retire seek true inner bliss!'

*Sanyāsis* are courageous people. They are not cowards who walk away from society because they can't succeed by society's rules. No! It takes tremendous courage and insight to recognize the transitory nature of life and its limited offer of happiness, to say 'I want something more.' It takes enormous courage to escape from the materialism of the world with an attitude of seeking one's true purpose in life.

'What is the purpose of my life, Krishna?' wailed Arjuna.

Arjuna is now questioning himself, his training and his purpose when faced with the task of fighting against his kinsmen. The scene from his chariot has taken him off balance! In his heart he knows that what he is about to do is correct. All of his training as a *kṣatriya* confirms this as well. But when faced with the reality of actually killing those who have been near and dear to him, he loses his will. Why?

Arjuna is a courageous man. Only a courageous person will have the confidence to open himself up so transparently and expose his innermost fears and seek help. Arjuna was not depressed. He was not frustrated. He was not afraid in the obvious sense.

Arjuna was confused, but in a way that was different from what we see in Duryodhana's behavior. Based upon all his training and society's guidance, Arjuna could certainly differentiate between actions that are right or wrong. His sudden confusion grew out of a concern that what he had been taught throughout his life, the very foundation upon which he stood, might be wrong. 'Could this be possible?' he asked himself for the first time.

Fortunately for Arjuna, his charioteer is none other than Krishna Himself, Lord of all beings and knower of all! Only He can see what is at the heart of Arjuna's grief. Only He could provide answers to Arjuna's doubts and the right solutions to Arjuna's dilemma.

Arjuna argues that the reason one would fight to gain power and wealth was for the sake of one's near and dear ones. However, these people who were now gathered in battle, ready to lay down their lives and lose their possessions, were the ones with whom Arjuna should fight! As we saw, they were his teachers, fathers, grandfathers, uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives.

Arjuna declared that even if they killed him, he would not consider killing them at any cost, even if he gained the possession of all three worlds as his reward. He then questioned Krishna rhetorically, that if he would not kill them for all the riches of the three worlds, why would he destroy them for the sake of earth, this one world, alone?

When asking this question, Arjuna calls Krishna Madhusudana, which means the slayer of the demon Madhu. Arjuna implies that Krishna may be a destroyer, but Arjuna himself would not like to be one like Him.

Arjuna's dilemma had now become deeper and more complicated. He had now got into justifications as to why he should not kill, justifications that have no merit from the standpoint of a warrior.

Arjuna's initial dilemma was with his value system. As a *kṣatriya* he was bound by duty to destroy enemies and acquire material possessions. The dilemma was created by the fact that his enemies were his kinsmen, teachers and friends. To any observer, his dilemma had validity. But now, he tries to convince himself through further arguments that actually lack strength.

Arjuna's mind was playing tricks on him. This is a common game we all play with ourselves. When the stakes are high in any competitive environment, when they are too high for comfort, we play this game. We fantasize about rewards far greater than what could possibly materialize. The more unrealistic and unlikely the reward, the easier it is to refuse it.

Once we convince ourselves of this imaginary sacrifice of imaginary rewards, we find it easier to walk away from the more realistic and tougher challenges that we have at hand. Arjuna is playing the same game.

Arjuna said he would not kill even if he were to be killed. This is just a lie that his mind is imposing on him. It is his own loss of identity that is bothering him, the loss of identity that would result from the destruction of his lineage.

Arjuna then went on to say that he would not consider killing his kinsmen and teachers, even if he were offered all the three worlds of this universe in return; even such a great reward would not attract him. Why then, he queries, would the reward of just this planet earth, be attractive to him?

Who was offering Arjuna the three worlds anyway? The notion was a pure figment of his overexcited imagination. If Krishna had turned around and offered Arjuna the control of the universe, Arjuna's dilemma would have actually become



far worse! However, posing it as a symbolic question as Arjuna did, made him look noble.

There is a folk tale in Tamil, in which a jackal offers a crow fruits to eat while trying to entice the bird and capture it. The crow is interested in the fruit but it is smart also! It refuses the offer and consoles itself by saying that the fruit was probably sour, otherwise the jackal itself would have eaten it. 'Oh, oh, this fruit is sour,' the bird says, 'I don't want it.'

Arjuna's tale is similar. He is consoling himself with the idea that the rewards of winning this battle are too small and that even if he were to be offered control of the universe, he would not be tempted. It is a safe position he is taking, since the chances of his being offered the control of the universe are infinitely small. What matters is that it calms his bruised mind and keeps the focus off the real source of his fear.

Time and again, people play this game with themselves and others. It starts when we cannot face the truth and therefore cannot tell the truth. Whatever be the reason, the truth is dangerous, both to the one who speaks it and to the one who hears it. So we camouflage the truth in a more acceptable presentation. Then we are caught in denial.

Arjuna was afraid to lose his own identity through the loss of so many well-established relationships in his life. However, that truth would hurt him and he was not prepared to see it. Perhaps he was not even aware of this truth. It might have been well hidden in his unconscious. For the majority of us, our identity lies in the roles we play, the responsibilities that we have, the worrying we do and the acceptance that we receive from others. Without these possessions and relationships to form the foundation of our personalities, without the foundation of 'mine', we feel lost and have no 'I'. Like us, Arjuna found it better to invent a host of other reasons to avoid facing the truth.

A senior government official, a devotee, once called me in the middle of the night, desperate to see me. 'I must see you now,' he said. 'I am desperate. I am so bogged down by problems and so depressed, I may even commit suicide. It is a matter of life and death. I need to see you immediately.'

I talked to him for a while and managed to calm him down and suggested that he could come the next morning and that I would see him.

'No, no,' he replied. 'I cannot come tomorrow morning. I have urgent meetings that I cannot miss. I will come some other time.'

A few minutes earlier, seeing me immediately was a matter of life and death to him. Now, his meeting in the morning was more critical!

We create illusions in our mind about the situations we face, about how critical they are to our existence. Then we create fantasies in our minds about what is going to happen to us, be it an imagined good result or a difficulty. We do everything except face the present moment with awareness.

As we will see later, facing the present moment is precisely what Krishna forces Arjuna to do. When Arjuna is able to surrender to Krishna's teachings and bring his attention to the present, his doubts and illusions dissolve. Arjuna then understands what he needs to do and goes about doing it with purpose and full commitment.

*Q: Arjuna was a successful warrior and yet he goes into depression. At least he had a master who could help him. What can others do?*

There are two kinds of depression. One is 'depression of failure'. Time and again you try for some end result and you fail. You then get frustrated. After a while, depending upon how persevering you are, you may keep trying and succeed or give up and move to another objective.

This is why patience and perseverance are considered great virtues. Each attempt is a new attempt and not linked to what happened before. This is what I call 'unclutching'. So long as you do not relate a past failure to your current failure, you can continue to be energized and keep trying and ultimately be successful.

Most of what you do is like tossing a coin! The end result is one of probability. The more you attempt, the more the chance of your success.

In the so-called less developed countries, more people suffer from this depression of failure. They would like to acquire more material possessions, and until they acquire these they are constantly striving and sometimes become depressed.

The other kind of depression is 'depression of success'. This is common in developed societies. Here, you are successful in acquiring all that you have dreamed of, but then start wondering what the purpose of all these acquisitions is!

Wealth, relationships, pleasures and all these external acquisitions create more wants. Enjoyment of what one acquires is no longer the purpose. Acquisition itself

becomes the purpose. This can never end. It becomes an addiction. The more one acquires, the less one derives pleasure.

People ask me time and again in the USA, '*Swami*, we have everything that we ever wanted, far more than we ever dreamt as possible. Yet we are dissatisfied. We have all that we always wanted, but now we do not understand why we wanted them. There is no joy.'

Of course, there is no joy. You think joy comes from outside. So, you change cars every year, houses every three years and spouses every five years! No, joy comes from within.

That is why in the *vedic* culture there was no word for divorce! The concept itself was unknown! In those days, you never attempted to change your spouse; you worked on changing your perception and personality instead. The external change will never bring you happiness; the inner transformation always will.

How do people cope with depression of success?

The first is through addiction. One keeps acquiring without even knowing why. This is the classic example of decreasing value with increasing inputs. It never works. Whether it is alcohol, drugs, sex or wealth, more and more delivers less and less. In fact, it delivers more and more suffering, that's all.

Depression of success can lead to suicide, either just killing oneself or slowly dying within, and becoming the living dead. Addiction is an active way of inviting suffering, and depression is a passive way of inviting suffering. Both methods are dead ends. The third method, which only a few intelligent people choose, is that of meditation. You have to go into the depression to get to know it, to analyze it and come out of it. These are the three ways to cope with depression. You have to choose your own path.

You may ask, 'But is it not difficult?'

It is not!

Just change the programming in your mind! Instead of always saying it is difficult, start saying it is easy! It is you who creates the word 'difficult' in your mind. In the beginning your mind will not accept that it is easy. It will resist. But if you go on telling yourself that it is easy, you will find that you have become more positive in your whole outlook.

Ramana Maharshi, an enlightened master from India, sings so beautifully:

‘So easy is this Self-Realization, so easy this enlightenment!’

His followers ask, ‘How can you say it is easy?’ He explains that we need to work hard to achieve anything in the outer world, to have a good lifestyle. But we only have to relax and be quiet to achieve in the inner world, and that is enough!

You have been trained to achieve many difficult things but you forget the simple thing. All you need to do is look into yourself. You cannot say that you are so poor that you cannot even address your mind with good words, or speak kindly to yourself. Of course, you can!

You do not need complicated techniques to achieve this. People talk of ‘stillness of mind’, ‘*prāṇāyāma*’, and all such big words. These create more complications.

Meditation is simple. Now, as you are sitting, just become aware of your boundary. Not going where you are not is meditation. Being where you are is meditation. Usually when you are here, you are thinking of your home. When you are at home, you are thinking of the evening discourse. At the discourse you are thinking of when you can return home. At home you are thinking of the next day’s office work. At the office you are planning an evening outing. When outside, you start thinking of home again. We are never where our body is. So being in the present, living with awareness and consciousness is what I call meditation.

We are always disturbed by too many words and ideas. Just relax and be where you are. Feel the ground, feel how you are sitting, and feel all the parts of your body. Just experience the present. By just being totally in the body you will start experiencing life. Because this idea is so simple, it is difficult to understand.

There is a Zen *koan* about the Truth. It says:

It is too clear and so it is hard to see.

A dunce once searched for a fire with a lighted lantern.

Had he known what fire was,

He could have cooked his rice much sooner!

The truth is too simple and is right there for us to see, but we make it so complicated!

All our life we are used to moving out of our body in search of pleasures and so it is difficult to come out of it.

We are used to living either thinking about or regretting whatever we have done in the past, or in the future speculating about what can happen. If you are used to living in the past and in the future, don't be bothered by it.

Here is a logical example: when you have a headache, you try to come out of it. You take medicine to come out of it because painlessness is your nature and you want to come back to that state quickly. In the same way, if worrying and thinking about the past and the future is your nature, then why do you want to come out of it? You want to come out because it is not your nature.

Why then are you associating yourself with the worrying? Associate yourself with living in the present.

You have come from France and settled in the USA for the past 30 years. As you no longer practice speaking French, you have forgotten how to speak French. Suddenly if somebody starts speaking in French, will you not remember? In the same way, bliss and living in the present is a language closer to you than your mother tongue. Up to the age of seven, you were in that state. So start reclaiming that forgotten language, that forgotten state.

Moving into the present allows you to disassociate from guilt, regret, greed and speculation. It will allow you to disengage from past happenings that you project into the future. These are the projections that invite suffering. You understand that success and failure are both in your mind. You learn to perform without attachment to the end result.

You then walk out of any possibility of depression!



## Good Men Do Not Kill

*1.36 What pleasure will we get by destroying the sons of Dhritarashtra, Janardana? Only sin will overcome us if we slay these wrongdoers.*

*1.37 It is not proper for us to kill the sons of Dhritarashtra and our friends.*

*How could we be happy by killing our own kinsmen, Madhava?*

*1.38, 1.39 O Janardana, although these men are consumed by greed and they see no fault in killing one's family or quarreling with friends,*

*Why should we, who understand the evil of the destruction of a dynasty, not turn away from these acts?*

Here is Arjuna's dilemma spoken plainly. He had two options and is looking to be convinced of one or the other. The first was that going to battle was wrong, especially against his kinsmen. Therefore he should cease and desist, walk away from the war before it starts. All his arguments up to this point were in this line of thinking. At the same time, Arjuna was open to the possibility that what he had set out to do was indeed correct, in which case he would go back into battle mode, as a true *kṣatriya* would do.

To begin with had Arjuna been totally convinced that war against his kinsmen was wrong, he would not have come to the battlefield. It was his degree of awareness that raised within him the question of retreat from his duty. To Arjuna's credit, he listened to what his mind had to say and turned to the master for guidance and resolution.

Arjuna's mind now brings up one more argument. Arjuna agreed that Duryodhana and his allies were the aggressors and wrongdoers. Whatever they had done to him, his brothers and his wife was not pardonable, and they needed to be punished for that. The laws of the land would concur. By all rights Arjuna would have been quite justified in attacking and killing those wrongdoers for what they had done.

‘But,’ Arjuna asked, ‘Would one wrong be corrected by another wrong? How can I be happy killing my kinsmen, however justified I might be in doing that? Their misdeeds cannot be remedied by my misdeed and that would only make me miserable.’

There are two factors central to Arjuna’s dilemma.

The first one is that of relationship. The problem that Arjuna faced is one that we all face when asked to do unpleasant things to people we know. It is always easier to criticize and punish people one does not know. To be faceless is to be fearless. With people one knows, with whom one has established bonds of friendship, there is a danger of breaking it through perceived negative behavior, even when it may be fully justified.

To face this factor in one’s dilemma, one must first break the connection or develop a sense of detachment that allows action without worrying about the consequences. One follows the process and the path and leaves the result to the process. As long as the path is right, whatever destination the path takes one to, will also be right.

Over the ages, this sense of connection had been broken by religious and societal separation. Contrary to what anyone may say, religion separates. It segregates and it destroys. More people have been killed in religious wars over the ages than for any other reason. As Lenin famously remarked, ‘Religion is the opium that blunts one’s sensitivity to another human and allows one to ill-treat, maim and kill another human.’

Terrorists are only the modern representation of what has gone on for centuries in many nations in the name of religion. It is nothing new. Destroying one another has happened through the ages, within religions through artificially created separations, and between religions in the name and defense of my god versus your god.

When religion was deemed insufficient reason to kill, man found other ‘rational’ reasons to segregate and kill: color of the skin, language and cultural differences, territorial disputes and more. Anything that could differentiate, anything that created the possibility of fear or threat was a good enough reason to discriminate and destroy. As one present day activist has put it, ignorance breeds fear, fear breeds hatred and hatred breeds violence. It begins with our ignorance.

To overcome this isolation, we need to realize that no man is an island. We are all connected. We are interconnected at the spiritual level, and recent discoveries show that we are also interconnected at the cellular level. Studies in molecular

cellular biology by path-breaking scientists such as Bruce Lipton show that Darwin was wrong when he said we must compete to survive. In fact, we need to collaborate to survive. That is what cells do. They know intuitively that they are interconnected, that they are part of a larger system.

When we arrive on planet earth, we are open to all possibilities. As children, we are centered upon ourselves as children in a simple and beautiful way, and open to all connections. It is as if we are a large open area that anyone can access. Over time, we build walls. We build walls believing that these walls will keep us safe and that the connections that we have established inside the walls are ours to keep. Bit by bit, the open space we started with becomes a maze. We do not know how to exit and if we do exit, we do not know how to enter again. We are lost inside!

The silos need to be broken. The islands need to be bridged. People need to communicate and collaborate instead of isolating themselves and competing. At the basic cellular level, it is now found that cells like to cluster together, and form clumps that can communicate. It is found that cells communicate through their boundary membranes and not through their nuclei as had been assumed. Competition does not ensure survival; collaboration does. Communication does.

However, when we work valuing only the results, our efforts become counterproductive. As long as this collaboration is selfless, as long as it is for the collective good and collective survival, from the awareness that we all are a part of the collective consciousness, this collaboration is extremely effective. We must consider process and source along with the result.

The other factor that Arjuna faces is the problem of directness of action. In a war of this type, Arjuna was faced with the transparent consequences of his action. If he shot an arrow and killed a kinsman, death was a direct result of his action. This is far different from modern warfare. Pressing a button could result in the death of millions. There is enough nuclear arsenal stored in the world to destroy the planet many times over.

Arjuna did not have the luxury of remote destruction. He had to look the victim in the eye before releasing his arrow. He was aware of whom he was killing and why. He felt the destruction within himself when he killed someone else.

Arjuna was affected by the combination of these two factors: that of being connected by kinship to his enemies and the fact that he had to kill them directly and personally. It affected him because he was not a Duryodhana, who denied to himself and others the consequences of his actions. It affected Arjuna because he



was not a Krishna who would have taken responsibility for his actions, being aware all the time. Arjuna was neither Krishna nor Duryodhana. His mind was pointing out that he might be doing wrong, but his mind had not yet ascended into that state of awareness to be able to take responsibility for such actions.

This was Arjuna's dilemma.

Arjuna has now distanced himself further from his kinsmen. He earlier said that even if his kinsmen had made big mistakes, he should not repeat the same mistakes; he would not, even if he were to be offered the entire universe. He wondered what joy he would get by destroying his kinsmen and what would be the point of living as a king if he was alone to enjoy it.

He said that his kinsmen were in darkness. They saw nothing wrong in destroying one another and their own kinsmen. They were blinded by greed for power and control. They were ruled by blind ego. He asked Krishna, 'Shouldn't we be distancing ourselves from these people and their attitudes, we who are not ignorant, not in darkness and not blinded?'

Arjuna was pleading with Krishna, 'Please tell me, am I right? Please tell me, should I withdraw from this battle?'

But now, he condemned the same fathers, grandfathers, teachers, uncles and friends that he had referred to so passionately a few moments earlier. These are the same people who he claimed to hold in great respect and affection and therefore did not wish to kill. He shifted gears now and moved from the position of not killing them because they were his flesh and blood to a greater moral position of not wishing to kill them because it was morally reprehensible.

Arjuna said that destruction of the lineage, the dynasty, is evil, and that he recoiled from such a deed even though his opponents had no such compunction, blinded as they were by greed. Arjuna moved to higher ground from arguments of family to lineage and dynasty. It was now a matter of tradition and respect for the lineage that could be traced back to the moon, and an old, established tradition that would be a sin to dismantle and destroy.

Arjuna's dilemma now jumps to a larger arena. It's no longer about individuals, it is about the destruction of a race that had existed for thousands of years, tracing its roots back to celestial beings. How could he be expected to carry out such a horrible act, he pleaded.

In Arjuna's mind this was a big doubt. Killing a few individuals, even if kinsmen, was a mistake. Killing a whole generation was a far bigger sin, and now he was expected to destroy a whole race, the foundations of a proud and legendary dynasty. How could the future generations forgive him?

This was how the argument of Arjuna's dilemma shifted.

When Arjuna talks about the threat to his dynasty, it arises out of a fear of his own mortality. He has asked, 'Even if I am to die, as I must, should I not ensure the continuance of my dynasty that bears my signature, my identity, my DNA?'

*Q: You talked about Arjuna's dilemma. Was there really a dilemma? Dilemma is when one has choices. In many ways Arjuna had no choice about fighting his cousins. Wasn't it really fear that caused this confusion?*

We have choices in everything that we decide and act upon. In life we have choice in everything, including our birth and death.

Even in birth and death our spirit does have a choice. It is our undying spirit that decides where and to whom we will be born in the next birth. We choose our parents before birth just as we choose spouses and work once we are alive. We do not choose our children. They choose us.

Our spirit does decide our death. It is just that we are living deep in our unconscious during our lifetime and so we are unaware of this. Even a hundred years ago in India, old people had the capacity to foretell how and when they would die. Today there are people who can tell you when you are going to die and how to change that.

So, we do have choice. So did Arjuna.

At every point Arjuna had a choice, not just on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. In all earlier events, he allowed himself to be carried along with whatever happened around him. He was a wise man and understood that in life choices are fruitless.

Living in the realm of dilemmas is living in the realm of the mind, the outer edges of our personality. Since we have not been exposed to any other way, we consider this normal and efficient. But that is not true. When we operate from the center of our being, we move beautifully with the flow of life operating out of a place of clarity and intuition. It is much more efficient and creative.

In the battlefield of Kurukshetra Arjuna found it difficult to make the choice. So far, in everything he did he went by whatever was good for his brother or wife or loved ones. Everything he did was for others. He did not see the need to choose. Whatever option presented itself he chose. He was guided by the code of conduct of the *kṣatriya*, when he had to decide and act.

Even choosing Krishna was not his decision. Krishna made the offer to Duryodhana: 'Would you like me to be with you unarmed or would you like my unmatched Yadava army?'

In greed, Duryodhana chose the Yadava army. On the other hand, Arjuna gladly accepted Krishna unarmed!

For the first time now, Arjuna had a problem. He thought that the point of decision-making was over. The decision to wage war was a done deal. Of his brothers, Bhima was focused on the war because of his hatred for Duryodhana and what he had done to Draupadi. The two younger brothers went along with the others. Even the eldest, Yudhishtira, though he was ready to walk away without his kingdom, followed Krishna's advice to fight for it. He considered the war a responsibility that he had to fulfill. The Mahabharata war, in its essence, was Krishna's making.

Arjuna probably thought the same also. It was his responsibility to avenge the dishonor heaped on his clan. Unmatched in valor and skill, he was not afraid in any ordinary sense of the word. He was a man without fear. What happened to him on the battlefield, the choice that he was presented with now, was not something he had anticipated.

The sight of his kinsmen and his elders, ready for slaughter, presented for the first time the choice of either going ahead as he had planned or walking away from the battlefield. This was a choice that came from the depths of his unconscious, as we said before, his *saṁskāras*. Why?

As a *kṣatriya*, a fearless warrior, his code of life and his conditioning from birth was to avenge, to fight and to win. What is this *saṁskāra* that suddenly raises doubts in his mind?

The fact is that at this crucial moment, when the armies are all set to clash, the one moment when it is necessary to be focused and aware, Arjuna slips out of the present moment. That creates the dilemma. Arjuna's dilemma is one of being caught in the regrets of the past and the speculative prospects of the future.

Arjuna is upset that he has to fight against his elders, who are a part of his past. He is upset that many things will go wrong in the future. He is no longer focused in the present moment.

This happens to all of us in times of crisis. Because of the intensity of the situation, when we need to be the most focused, we are often the most flustered. We somehow think that we must bring the past and future into the equation for a successful outcome in the present situation. You need to remember that nothing of what has happened and what may happen are of any help or relevance to us in the present moment. The best decision comes from the spontaneous, creative intelligence available only in the present.

Usually when we are in a panic, we don't think clearly. Our minds are clouded with memories and fantasies that distract us. Our negative ideas about our potential future also keep us from giving all our attention to the internal intelligence always available to guide us. As of now, fantasies and fear rule Arjuna's mind. His unconscious mind in turn rules him. This creates his dilemma.

The only way out of his dilemma is with the guidance of his friend and master, Krishna. It is to Him that Arjuna turns now for clarity.



## The Plot Thickens

*1.40 With the destruction of dynasty, the eternal family tradition is destroyed too,*

*And the rest of the family becomes involved in immoral practices.*

*1.41 When immoral practices become common in the family, O Krishna,*

*The women of the family become corrupted,*

*And from the degradation of womanhood, O descendant of Varshni, arise social problems.*

*1.42 As these social problems increase, the family and those who destroy the family tradition are cast in hell,*

*As there is no offering of food and water to their ancestors.*

*1.43 Due to the evil deeds of the destroyers of family tradition,*

*All kinds of rituals and practices of caste and family are devastated.*

*1.44 O Janardana, I have heard that those who destroy family traditions dwell always in hell.*

By now, Arjuna had become desperate. His arguments seemed weak, even to him. And we might wonder if they were making any impression on Krishna at all. His next attempt was to broaden the argument to include the tragic impact this war would have on future generations and the entire Kuru race.

Arjuna starts quoting the scriptures of social laws to explain to Krishna the evil his destructive actions would bring to future generations of the dynasty.

The destruction of a noble lineage would bring about the decline in commitment to the rites and rituals that make society civilized and moral.

Arjuna then elaborated upon these immoral and unrighteous acts.

He said that women in the family would become unchaste and that mixing with other castes would follow, resulting in children of mixed castes, which would be undesirable. Those who destroy family traditions would ruin all sacred practices and lead the families into polluted progeny, and such people had no place to go but hell.

To understand what Arjuna said, it is important to understand the origin of the caste tradition in Hindu religion.

At the age of five, a child was given to the care of a spiritual master by the parents in the ancient Indian education system called *gurukul*. The master became mother, father and teacher to the child. By living in close proximity to an enlightened master, the child's personality and expression was observed. These factors, along with any spiritual experiences before physical maturity, determined how the youngster was trained – either for *sanyās* (spiritual fulfillment) or for married life. The child's natural aptitudes formed the basis for the caste classification, *varṇāśrama*. *Brāhmanas* (priests/teachers), *kṣatriyas* (kings/warriors), *vaiśyas* (merchants/tradesmen) and *śūdras* (agricultural/service) are these four classes.

Even at this level of understanding, the truths expounded in the Gita are about personal transformation. Each verse of the Gita is a *sūtra*, a technique that can work on your being and transform you.

The essence of the Gita is about the present moment. That is how Krishna brings Arjuna into awareness. Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say that the Gita is *tagi*, a corruption of the word 'tyāg' that meant renunciation or surrender. Gita is about surrendering the past and the future to the present.

The *vedic gurukul* system was not concerned with whether the child's parents were *brāhmaṇa* or *vaiśya*. If the guru found that the child had the natural aptitude to learn the scriptures, the child would be trained as a *brāhmaṇa*. Irrespective of parentage, boys and girls were taught the *Gāyatri mantra* at age seven, which allowed their natural intelligence to blossom. Those whose ability leaned towards the spiritual path and who expressed this aptitude through personal development and experiences were trained in the scriptures. Others were trained in materially relevant arts and sciences so that they could re-enter the world with a mature, integrated personality.

Such was the origin of the caste system. This system was similar to the Guild system that prevailed in England thousands of years later. It is said to have contributed much to the Industrial Revolution that made England a super colonial power at one time.

Over time, this caste system was corrupted through human greed. Those who believed that they were doing more responsible work, and therefore were more respected, such as the *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas*, decided to pass on their caste qualification to their children as if it was their birthright. Such a practice had no scriptural sanction.

The son of a *brāhmaṇa*, who had neither the aptitude nor the knowledge to be a *brāhmaṇa*, ceased to have the right and qualifications to be called a *brāhmaṇa*. The son of a *śūdra*, if he exhibited the aptitude and developed the skills to learn the scriptures and decided to lead a spiritual life, had every right and qualification to be called a *brāhmaṇa*. That is the scriptural truth.

Arjuna's doubts about caste pollution had no scriptural base or merit. What he referred to became the societal norm because of human greed. There were many instances of caste mixture even in the great Kuru lineage that Arjuna claimed would be destroyed. Satyawati, his great grandmother, was a fisherman's daughter who his great grandfather, Shantanu, became infatuated with.

Arjuna himself had wives who were not of *kṣatriya* lineage by birth.

Arjuna talked as if mired in total confusion when he linked practice of rites and rituals with morality and chastity. He talked about women becoming unchaste as a result of families not following rites and rituals. His logic was distorted.

Rites and rituals, as prescribed in the scriptures, are an expression of one's inner awareness. They become useful when one is aware. Awareness is not created by blind practice of rites and rituals. How many people we see muttering their prayers and *mantra*, rolling their rosary beads while thinking of something else! God's name is on their tongues but their shopping lists are in their minds!

Arjuna voiced the sentiments of organized religion and priesthood, which derive their power and monetary base from such rites and rituals. They use these rites and rituals, and their sole authority to perform them, as a factor of control over the masses. This is how, in each culture and religion, the power of the priestly class was established, as if they were the sole mediators to God.

Arjuna talked about ancestral worship and implied that the offspring of mixed caste have no right to make offerings to their ancestors, leaving them lost in the

realms beyond death. It is the confusion that has prevailed over the ages that Arjuna captured and presented. He raises doubts on behalf of mankind and seeks clarification. The dilemma was not only Arjuna's, but also of mankind.

There are no ancestral spirits waiting to be pacified by us. If the spirit is enlightened it merges with the infinite energy. If not, it gets reborn within three *kṣaṇas*, three moments. Spirits do not hang around waiting to be pacified. Nor do they go to hell if they are not pacified.

There is no hell or heaven in the sense that we have been taught. Hell and heaven are in our minds. They are psychological spaces, not geographical places. We are in hell when we are depressed, guilty and in suffering. We are in heaven when we feel and express love, joy and gratitude. We pass through hell and heaven even as we live, day-to-day, hour-to-hour and minute-by-minute. We do not have to wait for our death to taste hell or heaven.

Religions and religious authorities have created the concepts of hell and heaven, to insert guilt and motivation in people, to control others. They have also created the concept of sin. There is no sin in true spiritual terms. Where there is sin there is also merit. It is the principle of Tao. There can be no good without evil, and no evil without good. The only sin we are in, the original sin, is the ignorance of our own divinity.

Arjuna is not a fool. He understands all this perfectly. Yet, he voices his doubts as if ignorant, as if confused. He acts out of compassion for humanity when he articulates these doubts so that the divine Krishna can answer, to everyone's benefit.

A thoughtful man like Arjuna cannot talk about the lack of chastity of women without blaming the men who are equally responsible. He reflects here the superior attitude of men over the ages, those who have treated women with undue superiority. The doubts he voices are those of the society he lives in, and those doubts have not changed in thousands of years.

*Q: How does an enlightened person react to the physical environment?*

He responds in the same way as an ordinary person.

There is a beautiful Zen statement: before enlightenment, a mountain is a mountain, a tree is a tree, a river is a river. While seeking, a mountain is not a



mountain, a tree is not a tree, a river is not a river; one is confused, and searching for meanings and significance everywhere. After enlightenment, again a mountain is a mountain, a tree is a tree, a river is a river!

Although the enlightened being reacts the same way to the different things around us, after enlightenment he sees it all from a different plane. A normal person always sees in a distorted way, as he wants to see it.

A small story:

Two elderly women met after many years.

One of them asked, 'What happened to your son?'

The other woman replied, 'My son? He is so unlucky. Unfortunately he got married to a girl who won't do any work in the house. She won't cook, she won't sew, she won't even wash or clean. All she does is eat, sleep and read in bed. My poor son even has to bring her breakfast to her bed.'

'That's very bad! And how is your daughter?'

'She is a lucky girl! She has married a very nice person. He won't let her do a thing in the house. He does all the cooking, sewing, washing and cleaning. And every morning he brings her breakfast to the bed. All she does is sleep for as long as she wants and spend the rest of the day relaxing and reading.'

Just observe how we see things! Same situation, same person, but the reactions are different depending on whether its the son or the son-in-law who does the house work! This is what we mean when we say we see according to our perception. But an enlightened person sees things as they are, with neither attachment nor detachment.

An enlightened being takes life as it flows. He does not attempt to change it according to his convenience. He is passively active, not lazy.

How do we distinguish between letting life flow and laziness? In laziness you will always be tired. The more you rest, the more you will be tired; you will become tired from resting. Letting go and allowing life to flow, you will be bubbling, alive, fresh and radiating energy. If you are confused, you are in laziness. The moment you surrender, you will have no confusion, and automatically you will cooperate to let life flow. You will only be in ecstasy.

*Q: People wonder whether they need to be qualified to be enlightened. Do they need to do good deeds? Do they need to be scholars? Do they need to belong to a particular caste or creed or religion?*

Someone in India asked me if those in the 'untouchable' caste could ever find enlightenment?

As long as you have an idea that you are untouchable, and you are unfit, you can't find enlightenment. The moment you drop that idea, you can find enlightenment. Nobody is untouchable. The idea is wrong, and happens due to some inferiority complex. If somebody claims you can't touch him because he is holier than you, then be sure only he is the untouchable one.

Understand that saints and sinners are both the same distance from enlightenment. The saint has no advantage so long as the sinner has the same craving for enlightenment as the saint.

People often ask me why we are not working on projects such as environment improvement, population management and stopping wars. A socially correct answer would be, 'Yes, we must work for global peace, a better environment, equal distribution of wealth and so on.' But my honest answer is this: transform yourself. Only individual transformation can ensure all these at the same time. You can't do otherwise.

If society could do anything else it would have done it by now. Let us be honest that we are not able to do anything much socially. We always feel the world is totally spoiled now and that in ancient times the world was beautiful.

From the Harappa-Mohenjodaro culture, which is thousands of years old, they found writings crying about the state of affairs at that time itself. They have unearthed writings from those days that say, 'There is so much war, society is deteriorating, but in olden times society was much better.' Even thousands of years ago, people thought that the past was better!

There was no such time when only good prevailed! The idea of a golden past is used only to postpone accepting reality. Maybe the news did not reach others so people did not know about it. But both good and bad existed in the past and will always exist in future also. If you awaken yourself, you can go beyond it. If you become enlightened, you can take yourself out of the collective negative consciousness, thereby reducing it. Everybody wants to spread peace according to his own perception, not according to others' perceptions.

I was in an inter-religion conference where one person was preaching, 'All of you accept and convert to my religion so that we won't fight.' The very statement clearly misses the whole thing! The point is not to convert everybody to your religion but to acknowledge that all religions are one and go beyond that also into pure spirituality. The problem is, every religion takes the sword to spread peace! But no revolution will help. It will only make matters worse. Only individual evolution will help, because as you raise your consciousness, you add to the collective positive energy on earth and diminish the collective negative energy.

I often say that what you need to evolve in is consciousness, not conscience. People ask how I can make such a statement when Hitler, Saddam and serial killers have no conscience, and cause havoc. They ask me if it is not essential to have a conscience that tells us what is right and wrong.

Please understand, a person who has real consciousness, cannot hurt others or kill others, because he feels others to be extensions of himself. A person with conscience may not kill with the knife, but he will kill with words because his being can still be violent. With conscience, you will be socially nonviolent, but with consciousness, your being itself will be nonviolent.

According to me, morality should be based on consciousness, not on conscience. Conscience is a poor substitute for consciousness. In our meditation program called Nithyananda Spurana Program, also called Life Bliss Program Level II, we help people experience at least one glimpse of consciousness, so they can start living with consciousness instead of conscience.

Anything based on conscience is skin deep. It is not eternal. Anything based on consciousness is eternal. We should work for a conscious experience. Just because we have not had a conscious experience, we should not compromise and settle for having only a good conscience.

Our morality, understanding, lifestyle, everything, should be based on consciousness. When it is based on conscience, it is based on fear and greed. If the idea that you should not speed is based on fear, when you don't see a cop's car you will speed. It becomes tasty to break laws and you feel courageous also. Whenever any rule is followed because of fear and greed, you will be waiting for the chance to break the rule. Children saying 'no' to parents is because they feel good breaking rules. It makes them feel they have proved themselves. If morality is based on conscience, you will always do something to violate it, directly or indirectly.

Consciousness is the guru, the master; conscience is not. With conscience, always a set of do's and don'ts will be given, and you will always be fighting it. The more conscience you have, the more dead you will be; the more schizophrenic you will be. With consciousness you will never have a doubt. You will just do what has to be done.

People ask, how does one know that one is enlightened?

The moment you become enlightened, the doubt itself disappears! Just as you have no doubt that you are seeing me, enlightenment is a clear experience, and the question itself disappears. As long as the question is there, you are not enlightened.

Then the next question is, 'How does one become enlightened?'

It is as simple as 1, 2 and 3:

1. Start meditating
2. Continue meditating
3. Continue meditating!

Meditation is the only key to the experience that you are enlightened. Start with some meditation technique. Surely you will see the ultimate truth. Even though you don't believe you are a lion, you *are* a lion.

In fact, you *are* already enlightened! That is your true nature. You are not aware of it, that is all. So, enlightenment can never be a goal to work towards, because you are already there.

Awake, arise and stop! You have arrived! Drop your doubts.

Surrender to the Divine by saying, 'You are the one who gave me belief and doubt. You keep both and let me be free.'

A part of you believes in you, a part of you has doubts about you. Surrender both the doubt and the faith to the Divine. You want to keep only belief, but leave the doubt. That's where the trouble begins. Surrender both, then you will go beyond both. You will experience *nityānanda*, eternal bliss!



## The Breakdown

*1.45 Alas, we are preparing to commit greatly sinful acts by killing our kinsmen,*

*Driven by the desire to enjoy royal happiness.*

*1.46 I would consider it better for the Kaurava to kill me unarmed and unresisting, rather than for me to fight them.*

*1.47 Sanjaya said:*

*Having said this on the battlefield, Arjuna cast aside his bow and arrows*

*And sat down on the chariot, his mind overwhelmed with grief.*

Arjuna was ready to give up. He was all set to run away from the battlefield and escape from the reality of his duty.

He had convinced himself through his own illusory arguments that what he had embarked upon was pure evil, nothing but evil, and therefore he wanted no part of it. He said, 'I am ready to lay down arms and be defenseless. Let Duryodhana and his men kill me.'

For a *kṣatriya* to say this means one of two things: His act is one of total surrender, or the helplessness of extreme confusion. A *kṣatriya* warrior, a supreme warrior such as Arjuna knows no fear. It is neither fear of death nor fear of injury that compels him to say what he did.

As I remarked earlier, Arjuna was not in a mode of total surrender, not yet. He was not in the mode of *ahimsā*, nonviolence. He was not in tune with the cosmic consciousness to say that 'Killing others is killing myself, as I feel they are one with me.' His arguments about killing his kinsmen being like killing himself were born out of his ego and not out of self-realization.

Arjuna's desperation, his feeling of helplessness arose from his dilemma, which was becoming more extreme by the minute. Arjuna was an intelligent man, a thoughtful man. He was a man accustomed to the light of clarity but who was now in darkness. He did not know where he was headed. He was torn between his duty as a *kṣatriya* prince, and the scriptural codes of morality.

Arjuna's distress was complete. He sat down, unable to bear the weight of his emotions. He put down his bow and arrows, which signified that he was out of the battle.

Arjuna's delusion was complete. He was as far away from reality as he could possibly get. The greatest of warriors of his time, the greatest of men, was in the depths of despair due to the inner turmoil that he was going through.

The inner conflict between his upbringing and value systems, his *saṁskāras* and what he was about to do by waging war against his kinsmen, had reduced him to a pitiable wreck, who had now abandoned his weapons and collapsed inside his chariot. Arjuna, at this point, was no example of a true *kṣatriya*.

Arjuna was now a true example of mankind. He was being human. He was torn between darkness and light. He was experiencing the deep conflict between the unconscious *saṁskāras* that were driving him and the reality of what he ought to do. The clarity that would come about with the help of the great master, would be his enlightenment.

The darkness that surrounded Arjuna at this stage was *māyā*, the illusion that prevents all human beings from perceiving the Truth of Reality that pervades all our experiences. *Yā mā iti māyā*, that which is not real but appears as absolute is *māyā*. *Māyā* is not unreal in the sense that it does not exist. *Māyā* truly exists as reality. It veils, it covers Reality, the ultimate Truth, the Truth of our inner awareness, the Truth of our inner divinity; and therefore it is unreal, an illusion.

Had Arjuna been Krishna, had Arjuna been enlightened, he would not have been tormented by the play of his *māyā*. Had Arjuna been a Duryodhana, or even a Bhima whose individual consciousness was not awakened, he would have accepted the *māyā* without question, and again not been tormented by it. But, Arjuna is intelligent. He is partially awakened, a seeker. He is in the presence of the greatest of all masters. He is struggling to rid himself of his *māyā* and seek clarity.

It is Arjuna's ego that created the *māyā* in him. His own identity and his own identification with who he was, along with his conviction that he should preserve his lineage - all these factors created the illusion in him that he was something other than who he was. These created the doubt in him that he should do something other than what he was there to do.

All of us come into this world with no identity. As we grow we collect labels describing ourselves - mother, father, brother, sister, relative, employer, employee, colleague, enemy and so on. We become so associated with the labels and their accessories that we forget who we really are. Our life is then about seeking fulfillment in the wrong places.

A small story:

A worried man went to see a psychiatrist. He was smoking a pipe and wearing strange beads. He had long hair and his trousers were torn in some places.

Seeing him, the psychiatrist said, 'You say you're not a hippie. Then why are your clothes and hair like this?'

The worried man replied, 'That's what I'm here to find out, doctor.'

This is how it is for most of us! Like the hippie who went to the doctor to know himself, we search for happiness in the external world because that is where we have been taught to look for fulfillment. We only know how to look outside. Unfortunately, we keep believing that our bliss is outside of ourselves rather than at the core of our being. We have not learned how to look within and experience it.

Happiness comes from within. Eternal happiness that constantly flows as bliss is always within. You cannot find it outside. You cannot reach it through material possessions, through relationships, through selfish philanthropy. It is a state of no-mind that you experience within yourself.

As very young children we were all in bliss. Have you ever seen an unhappy baby, except when it is physically disturbed by hunger, thirst or pain? A young child is forever in bliss, always curious, always seeking, always energetic. As we grow, as we learn from others, we are taught to shift our attention away from that bliss. We learn from elders, from teachers, from people around us who have been at it longer than us. In short, we learn how to stop feeling blissful.

Just as we learned how to stop feeling blissful, we can also learn how to 'un-stop' that stopping of bliss. We can relearn how to connect with our blissful nature again. We can learn to become aware of who we really are.

That is the process Arjuna was going through. He had lost his awareness of inner bliss because of his *saṁskāras* and was in the deep throes of despair. The process of relearning, the process of transformation at the hands of the master was about to begin. If we become aware of that process, if we follow that process carefully over the eighteen chapters that the master takes His disciple through, we too can become aware.

Shankara says beautifully:

If you imbibe even a little of Bhagavad Gita, if you drink even a drop of Ganga water, if you think even once about that great master Krishna, you will never have to face death.

*Q: Swamiji, how does the tale of a war help us in day-to-day issues? There have been hundreds, if not thousands of wars in the history of mankind, and many have been well documented. These have not stopped other wars. They have not helped mankind learn. How does one expect Bhagavad Gita to transform peoples' attitudes?*

Mahabharata is not merely the tale of a war. It is a tale of many lives, which get involved in a war. The war itself is incidental to the story of the Pandava and Kaurava princes. What led to the war, how it could have been avoided and most importantly, why it was not avoided are the experiences from this epic.

Contrary to most accounts of wars, written as historical documents, Bhagavad Gita is about how an expression of the Divine convinces its human aspect to go to war as a part of fulfilling its responsibilities.

Bhagavad Gita is not about war; it is about how one should act in awareness, whatever be the circumstances before us. We cannot always choose the events of our lives, but we can choose to live them with awareness and spiritual maturity.

The scriptural authority of Gita stems from the assurance of Krishna guaranteeing Arjuna that His words are the Truth. It is the Divine instructing the human. You may not know or even believe that someone like Krishna ever lived on this planet earth. But many great masters throughout the ages have meditated upon these truths expounded by Krishna and affirmed them with their own direct experiences. I affirm them with my own inner experiences of the cosmic truth. Every word of this scripture resounds with Truth.

The truth of Bhagavad Gita exists at many levels. What you read from a translation or even a commentary is still only superficial. It is at the physical level. There are many more energy levels at which the Bhagavad Gita needs to be understood. These can only be conveyed in the intimacy of the master-disciple relationship.



Any personal transformation is dependent upon two things. First, we must want to be transformed. No master, no book, nothing can be of help if we do not wish to transform ourselves. We must seek to be transformed. The universe is not bothered about whether we are transformed or not; it is up to us. Second, we must be in the present moment in order for that transformation, that alchemy to happen. You cannot live in the past or fantasize about the future and expect to be transformed.

That is why meditation is such a powerful tool of personal transformation. In fact it is the only real tool of personal transformation, in addition to the enlightened master. No one can meditate on our behalf; we need to do it for ourselves. With practice, meditation immediately brings us into the present moment. We can be transformed, liberated, enlightened.

Unlike addictions that lower our consciousness and require more and more for the same effect, meditation raises our consciousness and takes less and less to get the same and deeper benefits. With experience, we will find that we flow through our days in mindful awareness and bliss.

Bhagavad Gita is meditation. Each verse is a *sūtra* that we can meditate upon. These verses, these profound truths, will take us deeper into inner awareness in meditation. As we contemplate upon them, they can transform us as nothing else can. That is why Shankara says that even a little reading of the Bhagavad Gita will liberate us.

Metaphorically, this epic is the story of our own inner war. It is the fight between our positive and negative tendencies, our fear and greed. In many ways we are at war from the moment we are socialized and conditioned.

Unfortunately, we are constantly at odds with ourselves. We do not know how to accept and celebrate everything that happens in the inner world and the outer world. We have yet to learn that life is good and our nature is bliss. So we struggle to define and bring 'order' to everything in life with the hope that we can succeed in being happy or at least not unhappy. In doing this we only bring chaos and suffering to ourselves and others.

Mahabharata is the story of this inner war. That is why this great expression, Bhagavad Gita, touches and transforms us even today. It is Arjuna's story but it is our story as well!

*Thus ends the first chapter of the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, called Arjunaviṣāda Yogaḥ, in the Brahmavidya Yogashastra Bhagavad Gita Upaniṣad.*

# BhagavadGita

## You Are God

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### CHAPTER 2

Make no mistake, you *are* divine!  
Whatever state you are in now,  
you are still divine within!  
Let Krishna tell you  
how to unleash your divine potential.



- ◆ *Swamiji*, you have used the word ‘pity’ in describing Arjuna’s state. Some people call it compassion that does not allow him to fight his kinsmen. Is there a difference?
- ◆ Krishna uses the term *ārya*. People say that Aryans were invaders of the ancient Indian people. Is that true?
- ◆ Why did Krishna choose the battlefield to deliver the great knowledge of Gita?
- ◆ How does the guru help the disciple? What is the process?
- ◆ When will Gita be accepted universally as a scripture?
- ◆ Why is Krishna wasting His time with Arjuna? Again and again Arjuna is coming up with the same questions. Obviously Arjuna does not have what it takes to understand the truth.
- ◆ You have been critical of philosophers. Isn’t it a bit unfair? There have been many great philosophers who have contributed highly to human consciousness.
- ◆ When Arjuna says that he cannot attack his revered teachers like Drona and Bhishma, is he not saying what needs to be said by any intelligent and righteous person?
- ◆ The question I have is about the past and the future. This has to do with astrologers and palmists who tell us our past and future. Some of them are correct and some of them are wrong. Does astrology have validity?
- ◆ How can we not grieve for the dead? Perhaps it is possible for Krishna and great masters like you, but for ordinary mortals this is not feasible.
- ◆ You said earlier that you are repeating Gita. Do you mean you are Krishna? Many proclaim they are God. Are you also in the same business?

- ◆ Is death the thoughtless state that you talked about? Does that mean death is the ultimate present moment?
- ◆ Why is it that we do not have memories of our past lives? It would be so easy to know what to do if we knew what mistakes we made in our past lives.
- ◆ Some masters talk of the Self as *pūrṇa* and some as *śūnya*. These have contradictory meanings. How can both be correct?
- ◆ Krishna urges Arjuna to fight. Many Westerners say that Krishna preached and practiced violence. Is this correct?
- ◆ The concept of reincarnation gets even more complicated when we are told that we can be reborn as animals or even insects. That is pretty tough to understand, is it not?
- ◆ Based on the beliefs of Christianity and Islam, rebirth or reincarnation is denied by the majority of the world's population today. Why do these religions deny this phenomenon if this is true?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you talked earlier about the depression of success, which affects many people around the world. What if a young person has experienced this several times? Is there hope?
- ◆ In many countries the death penalty has been banned as being inhumane. In others it is maintained as being essential to law and order. Which approach is correct?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, please comment on desires. Most masters recommend sealing of desires. How can this be done?
- ◆ If the Self cannot be destroyed or harmed, it cannot be hurt. Why then do we feel pain and why does the body get hurt?
- ◆ If the body one takes is determined by what one does in the previous life, would it mean that evil persons like Hitler will continue to be reborn as evil persons? Is there no redemption for such people under this scheme of things?

- ◆ Are Krishna and Christ the same? Both were born in confined places. Krishna was born in Mathura; Christ in a place called Mathiria. Both were shepherds and so on. If so, please explain.
- ◆ Krishna says that the truth is seemingly tangible in the middle and intangible in the beginning and the end. If he is referring to past, present and future, the past is also clear to us. Why is the beginning unclear then?
- ◆ I read somewhere that the whole concept of rebirth is negative. It is all about the continuance of suffering. All those who believe in rebirth are desperately trying to get out of it. So, what is the point in believing in it?
- ◆ Is it normal to speak less and seek silence as *Sādhana* or spiritual practice progresses?
- ◆ I have read that we have three bodies. You had talked about seven energy layers. Are these similar?
- ◆ If Krishna is the *Jagat Guru*, Lord of the universe, why was he only with the Pandava and Kaurava princes? Why did he not help the world?
- ◆ How can Krishna who is *Vedas* Himself denigrate the *Vedas* saying that they are useless?
- ◆ Krishna mentions *Sāṅkhya* as the knowledge that has been taught to Arjuna. He says He wants to take Arjuna through yoga. What is the difference?
- ◆ It is a natural response to look towards the end result whenever we do something. How can we give up thinking about the outcome?
- ◆ In the corporate world everything revolves around budgets and objectives. How realistic is it to work without goals in such an environment?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you spoke about needs and wants, and that needs carry their own energy for fulfillment. Does this mean that we can do nothing and things will happen?
- ◆ When Krishna advises Arjuna to withdraw his senses as a tortoise does, is He advocating the practice of *pratyāhāra*?

- ◆ *Swamiji*, you have said that the mind can never be stopped. Yet you speak of the no-mind state as the ideal. How can we reach the no-mind state if the mind cannot be stopped?
- ◆ How can Krishna generalize saying that desire leads to destruction? The world cannot operate if we have no desires and if everybody only meditates!
- ◆ *Swamiji*, when you say that we should live without ego, is it really possible to do that when we live in the material world? Wouldn't we then become failures materially?
- ◆ You described four states of mind. How does one distinguish between the state of deep sleep, *suṣupti*, and the mindless state of awareness, *turiya*, the fourth state?



## You Are God

It is here that we enter into the real Gita. It is from here that *Bhagavān* or God starts speaking.

Until now Krishna was speaking as a man, as Vasudeva Krishna, in His human form, but it is only from here that Krishna speaks as *Parabrahma* Krishna, as *Bhagavān*, as the universal Krishna, in His divine state.

An important point we all need to understand is that only an intelligent man will allow the other person to speak. We all speak continuously to each other, but a conversation does not really happen. The two are quite different. We don't have conversations. We simply carry out simultaneous monologues with each other. When the other person speaks we do not listen; we are busy preparing our own reply. Similarly, when we speak, the other person is actually preparing his response.

We are polite enough to pretend that we are listening so that we will, in turn, be heard. A conversation does not happen. You need intelligence to allow the other person to speak. Please understand that you do not need intelligence to speak; you need it only to listen.

A small story:

A person was telling his friend that he had not spoken to his wife for a whole week. His friend asked him whether he was angry with her or if he had fought with her.

The man replied, 'No, I am afraid of interrupting her!'

Maybe because Krishna is a male, he allowed Arjuna to speak!

We may either speak verbally or mentally, but in any case, we are speaking continuously. Why do you think psychiatrists are paid so well? The professions of

psychiatry and psychoanalysis are nothing but the art of listening. A psychiatrist is a person who asks expensive questions and just listens, nothing else!

We speak continuously. Even when we keep quiet, we are not listening.

A real incident:

A young trainee in psychiatry was overwhelmed by the ease with which his experienced mentor counseled patients. They poured their hearts out to him. The trainee was deeply disturbed by these traumatic experiences that were shared. Yet, his mentor went from one patient to another calmly and without being affected.

After a few weeks of this training the younger doctor approached his mentor and said, 'I am not sure I can bear this much longer. I am getting depressed. How can you listen to all these people without getting disturbed? What is the trick?'

His mentor calmly responded, 'Who listens!'

Krishna does listen. He listens carefully and answers compassionately. Of the original seven hundred and forty five verses in Gita, as part of the *Bhīṣma Purāṇa* of Mahabharata, He responds in depth to Arjuna's fifty-seven questions through six hundred and twenty verses.

In the first chapter Krishna does not say a word to interrupt Arjuna. He allows Arjuna to speak fully for one whole chapter. He keeps quiet even on seeing the depth of Arjuna's confusion and depression. He consciously analyzes the origin of Arjuna's thoughts to determine the platform of confusion upon which Arjuna is standing.

It is possible to become a successful businessman just by studying the first few chapters of Gita. You can reach the peak of your profession just by learning the art of listening. Once you listen clearly, you will automatically be able to answer clearly as well. A devotee once asked me, 'Swamiji, how is it that you are able to answer so many questions?' There is only one secret to this. I know how to listen to the question, that's all. If you know the technique of listening, the reply is immediately ready in your being.

The problem is that we do not trust ourselves and our innate intelligence to respond to a question without preparation. That is why we start preparing the reply even before listening to the question. We do not have the patience to listen



to the problem. Before we listen to it, we already start judging the speaker and develop the solution to the query. We are only interested in expressing what we know, not in addressing the real problem or even in understanding what the other person has to say.

We hear mechanically at best; we never really listen.

Here, Krishna is interested in the real problem and not interested in expressing what He knows. He wants Arjuna to have clarity of mind and is interested in helping him find a solution to his problem. He allows Arjuna to speak so that He can go to the root of the problem and address the issue.

One needs intelligence, or I may say enlightenment, to listen.

Only an enlightened master like Krishna can listen. In the first chapter He listens fully and completely. Even in the second chapter, He allows Arjuna to speak in many verses.

He knows that once He allows Arjuna to express his problems, Arjuna could himself find a solution to them.

People come to me and say, ‘Swamiji, you know our problems; please give us the answer.’ I ask them to state their problems clearly.

They say, ‘You are enlightened, you already know our problems; please give us the answer.’

I say, ‘Yes, I know your problem even if you don’t speak, but you will not know your own problem if you do not speak!’

Even if, in some cases, we may not be able to speak out in detail with clarity, we should be able to think through our problem, so that at least we understand what the problem is. Our mind should be open to possibilities.

I tell people during the *Ānanda Darśan* (energy awakening) in our programs that they can ask me for advice on problems that they face.

When you speak, the master listens. More importantly, you listen within yourself. Actually, it is not even necessary to speak and hold up people who are queuing up behind you. All that is needed is to keep your mind open so that the transmission can take place. Even if you do not verbalize, you can visualize your needs and problems and this will be even more powerful than your speech itself.

That is what happens on the Kurukshetra battlefield where Krishna is delivering the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna. People who have the rationality to compute time may wonder, 'Arjuna spoke for so long. Now Krishna speaks for so long. How is it possible for these two to hold such a long conversation in the middle of a battlefield? What were all the others doing? Wasn't Duryodhana fed up or didn't he think that this was a good opportunity to get rid of Arjuna and Krishna, as they talked and wasted everybody's time?'

That's how the logical, rational, unaware mind thinks. Such a mind cannot conceive of the possibility that a conversation can indeed take place in silence. People are not used to visualization. They lose this skill as they grow up. Children can visualize beautifully. That is why they can keep themselves busy talking silently to themselves and talking silently with imaginary friends. Education and logic rob us of this skill.

At the higher level of communication your mind needs to be still to allow the grace to move in. This is the subtlest and most powerful of all communication. At this level communication becomes communion.

When they talk of great masters like Ramana Maharshi communicating in silence, it was indeed true. To communicate, you need not open your mouth. You only need to open up your mind. When the mind is open and free of disturbing thoughts, especially in front of the master, communication can take place at the speed of light. The presence of the master will help still your mind. Answers will appear even before your questions are asked.

Seekers, intellectual seekers, with years of questioning and doubting behind them, come to me and ask, '*Swamiji*, why is it that when I come to you with hundreds of questions, when I am in front of you, there is no need to ask you about them? I feel as if the answers are already there!'

This is not imagination; this is the truth. Questions can only raise more questions. Questions are a reflection of your inner ego, which is violence. When you are in front of the master, a master you truly believe in, the first thing that happens is the melting of your ego. The ego just disappears like snow in the sun. Therefore, questions also disappear. In their place the answers, previously hidden by the veil of your ego and ignorance, surface. You start feeling that magically, miraculously, the answers appear in front of the master.

The truth is that the answers were all there, already there. Our ego would not allow us to accept and be aware of those answers. The master's presence dissolved the ego and let the answers out.

There is an interesting Zen story.

A soldier went to the master Nansen, with this problem.

A man kept a goose in a bottle, feeding it until it grew too large to get out of the neck of the bottle. Now, how did he get the goose out without killing the goose or breaking the bottle?

Nansen said to him, 'Oh Officer!'

The soldier responded, 'Yes master?'

Nansen exclaimed, 'There, the goose is out of the bottle!'

The moment the soldier addressed Nansen as master, accepted that he was his master, the goose, the ego, was out of the bottle, his body-mind!

Only when you open up to the master do you actually come to know your problem clearly and the answers come as if from nowhere. You can do it at three levels. You can converse and convey through words and the master will listen. At the next level you can communicate from the heart in silence; you can visualize instead of verbalizing in speech. Finally, you can commune in silence and the master will grasp this even more powerfully.

Here Krishna allowed Arjuna to verbalize, so that to begin with, Arjuna himself had the clarity to understand his problem. Once Arjuna expressed his confusion, he could relapse into silence and commune with the master.



## A Zen Slap Awakens!

*2.1 Sanjaya said,*

*As Arjuna's eyes overflowed with tears of pity and despair,*

*Krishna spoke to him thus.*

*2.2 Krishna said,*

*Wherefrom has this dejection descended on you at this critical time, Arjuna!*

*You behave unlike a nobleman and this will keep you away from realization.*

*2.3 Do not yield to fear, Partha! It does not befit you.*

*Drop this faint-heartedness and stand up, destroyer of enemies!*

Arjuna was distraught with pity and despair. His pity was for his opposition that consisted of kinsmen, elders, teachers, relatives and friends. He despaired at the thought of what would happen if he did have to kill them. His dilemma was complete and total. He had collapsed in his chariot and his bow and arrow had slipped from his hands.

Krishna allowed Arjuna to exhaust himself, physically, emotionally and spiritually. He listened to him carefully. Krishna wanted to give Arjuna time to open his mind, heart and being to Him, his friend, guide and master, so that His answers would penetrate Arjuna's very being.

Then He spoke for the first time, as if opening His being directly. Krishna says, 'My dear Arjuna, how have you acquired these impurities? They do not at all befit a man who knows the value of life. They lead not to higher planes but to infamy.'

This verse is connected to the next one.

‘O Partha! Do not yield to this degrading impotence. It does not become you. Give up such petty weakness of heart and arise, O destroyer of the enemy.’

I may say that this is the direction of the whole of Gita. Krishna is the true Zen master and does not beat around the bush. Understand that Krishna is not a philosopher; He addresses the issue straightaway.

Krishna asks Arjuna directly, ‘How did such impurities come upon you? They are not for a man like you. They will not lead you to higher planes but only defame you.’ In the next verse He asks Arjuna to give up this weakness and asks him to arise, addressing him as ‘destroyer of the enemy’.

This is a straight Zen response.

A disciple goes to an enlightened Zen master and asks, ‘Master, what is *Buddha*? How can I become *Buddha*? Please teach me.’

The master slaps him hard on his face.

The disciple is shocked, as he expected to receive some kind of meditation technique, a blessing or guidance. It was like going to a *svāmi* and asking him how to realize God or *ātman* and receiving a blow in return! But the disciple, being mature, does not speak ill of his master.

He says, ‘Master, I know that you do not do anything without a meaning. Though I am unable to understand the reason for your action, I cannot say it is wrong. Please explain.’

The master says, ‘Fool, you *are Buddha*. Why do you try to become something you *are* already? If a horse comes to me and asks how it can become a horse, how to eat grass and drink water, what can I do? You *are* already *that* and nothing else needs to be added to you. That’s why I slapped you, to awaken you. That’s all.’

Similarly, Krishna gives the direction to the whole Gita with this one ‘slap’.

Krishna knows Arjuna’s problem. Please understand that Arjuna is not depressed because of a spiritual search. It is just that he does not want a solution; he wants only support.

Understand, asking for solutions and asking for support are two different things.

What Arjuna needs is support, not a solution. This is why Krishna does not speak of spirituality in these two verses. Arjuna's problem originates from fear and worry. His *maṇipūraka cakra* (navel center) and *svādiṣṭhāna cakra* (being center), energy centers within the body that get locked due to worry and fear, are now completely locked! Because of his fear, he has deep seated complexes, stress and worry. Krishna addresses Arjuna's deep fear straightaway without any philosophy, and asks him to give up his foolish weakness and get up and fight. He does not offer any consolation, just a straightforward scolding, and a slap to awaken him!

If Arjuna had been in a mood of *stotra*, meaning devotional surrender that he reaches only later on, these two verses would have served as *sūtra* or techniques for him. If Arjuna had been without fear and expressed full faith and devotion in Krishna, these two verses would have been enough to get him up and going. He would have become enlightened or would have achieved the Ultimate just with these two verses.

The entire Gita would have been encapsulated here, and there would have been no need to continue. None of us would need to come here for eighteen days!

I spoke to you about *śāstra*, *stotra* and *sūtra* (wisdom, devotion and technique) in the first chapter.

All three can be a means to enlightenment for people of corresponding aptitudes.

*Śāstras* are the wisdom of scriptural inputs aimed at the intellectual seeker, the one centered in the head. *Stotras* are devotional songs and stories aimed at the emotional seeker who operates from the heart. *Sūtras* are techniques of meditation and yoga for the being level people. These are not exclusive, in that one must be practiced to the exclusion of another. The same person may be in a state to receive a *stotra* today and a *śāstra* tomorrow. At this point, Arjuna is in the state to be intellectually convinced and Krishna employs *śāstra* as the right approach.

Since he was not in the mood of *stotra*, not yet ready with devotion and faith, Krishna had to create the *śāstra* or method, to bring him to the *stotra* state. The whole issue was due to fear plus worry and depression because of this fear.

All our depressions have their roots in anxiety and fear. You need to stand up to them to be rid of them.

A small story:

A presidential candidate was addressing a press conference. He told the press persons, 'I am very optimistic about my future.'

The journalist asked, 'Then why do you look so worried?'

The candidate replied, 'My optimism is not warranted. So, I am worried.'

We constantly expect our optimism to be warranted and when we do not get the warranty, we start worrying. All our depression, worry and anxiety are nothing but a deep fear of life and fear of losing something.

There are many levels of fear: fear of losing our wealth and status, fear of losing a limb or our health, fear of losing our near and dear ones and fear of the unknown or death. That is why Krishna says that Arjuna is not behaving as an *ārya*, a word that can be interpreted as a nobleman. The term *ārya* is applied here to denote an aware human being, not a particular race or caste. *Vedic* literature says that an *ārya* is one who is evolved, cultured, a prince amongst men.

Here Krishna tells Arjuna that he is confronted with all the four fears: fear that he may lose whatever he possesses, that he may be maimed in the war, that he may lose his near and dear ones, and fourth, that he may lose his very life. These fears have in turn led to his worry.

Krishna directly addresses this worry and fear with the *śāstra*, the explanation of wisdom that is directed to the head, the intellect.

Later on in the Gita, in the eleventh chapter, after beholding Krishna's cosmic vision, Arjuna realizes who Krishna truly is. He understands that Krishna is beyond everything and beyond his imagination, his comprehension. He is not surprised any longer that all the deities worship Him and surrender to Him. Krishna then repeats the same words that He says now, after which the Gita ends and Arjuna engages in the war.

These same words uttered by Krishna later on, when Arjuna is in the state of *stotra*, when he is in a state of pure devotion and faith, become the *sūtra*, the technique of enlightenment for Arjuna. That stage is yet to happen. Since Arjuna is not yet in the devotional state now, these words are only plain wisdom.

Krishna is not a philosopher. All philosophy is an attempt to convince the other to do what the philosopher wants of him. It may be a very slow process, but still a process of trying to convince the other person of what to do.

Hitler, in his autobiography says that if a lie is repeated a hundred times, it becomes the truth and if a truth is expressed for the first time, people think it is a lie. Whether something is true or false does not depend on the actual fact, but on how many times it is repeated!

All philosophies, whether they are of communism or religion or politics, are the same. Philosophers invent logical reasons as to why you should follow their words.

Here Krishna is not a philosopher and does not want to create any philosophy.

He tries to give the conclusion directly to Arjuna. However, as Arjuna is not in the mood to receive it because he is not mature enough to assimilate it, Krishna needs to give Arjuna the experience.

There is a beautiful story in the *Upaniṣads*:

A disciple goes to the master and asks, 'O master! Teach me *atmagnana*, knowledge of the inner Self.'

The master says, 'Thou art that! *tatvamasi*, You are God.'

The disciple, unable to believe this, thinks to himself, 'How can I be God? I am still afraid of my wife. I have all these problems and a thousand questions!'

Only when the master proves to him that the master himself is God, the disciple trusts the master's words.

The master needs to first prove that he is God in order to make you understand that *you* are God. Here Krishna does the same thing by repeating that He is all of this.

Krishna later explains His glory and that all the deities, *Vedas*, the scriptural wisdom, are worshipping at His feet; the whole world is in Him. He makes these incredible statements that would appear egoistic to a normal person. And yet Krishna says all this, even at the risk of being misunderstood. He repeats that He is God to make you realize that *you* are God.

With authority He states, 'I am God' to make you realize that *you* are God.

You would not believe the words of ordinary people. You need to hear the words from a source of authority that has the right to say them. Here Krishna says the same words that He repeats throughout the entire Gita. But as of now Arjuna is not able to take it all in. It is too much for him to grasp in his present condition.

Once Krishna proves His divinity, Arjuna believes His words and is ready to follow them.

Similarly, when masters prove their divinity and perform great deeds or miracles, they do not do so for their ego satisfaction. They do them to prove that



they are God, so that you believe their words and experience that *you* are God. This is the reason why masters repeatedly prove their divinity through expression of their energies.

Bhagavad Gita is not part of the *Vedas* or *Upaniṣads* that are traditionally classified as sacred scriptures, or the *śruti* which are believed to have had divine origin. The Gita is part of an epic, a *purana*, the Mahabharata. Some even believe that Gita was a later addition to Mahabharata. Despite all that, Gita and Mahabharata are accepted universally as scriptures by all Hindu scholars. It is the authority with which Krishna is seen to deliver the Gita that makes it a scripture.

‘I am the Divine,’ says Krishna. ‘If you believe in Me, you too shall realize your inner divinity.’

It is this profound and yet simple message, that has resounded so deeply in the hearts, minds and beings of generations of Hindus, in turn establishing the scriptural sanctity of the Gita.

A great author wrote a book of just forty pages giving the gist of his philosophy. One reader asked him why the book was only forty pages long. The author replied that if he had the time he would have written a book of only twenty pages!

It requires intelligence to put anything into a clear, simple form or in a nutshell.

To go on and on, not much intelligence is required. Intelligent people express the same content in a few words. The less you know of something the more you speak and write about it.

Here all the verses of the Gita are reduced to just two verses by Krishna.

He straightaway addresses and clears the point where Arjuna is stuck, that is in his need for name and fame or *rajas*. A man who is centered on *satva*, goodness, who has neither greed nor lethargy but a neutral attitude, will work out of compassion. A man who is centered on *rajas* will work only for name and fame. A man who is centered on *tamas*, lethargy, will work only for sensual pleasures.

Duryodhana works only through *tamas*, which explains his cruel and gross behavior. Dharmaraja Yudhishtira works on *satva*, out of compassion. Here Arjuna is centered on *rajas*, therefore he is working only for name and fame. This is why Krishna asks him not to work in this way as it would ultimately bring Arjuna a bad

name. This is how He straightaway puts His hand on the tumor, the tumor that is the subtle ego working within Arjuna.

Fortunately for us, Arjuna is not intelligent enough. Or rather, he acts as if he is not intelligent enough to understand these words. He has lived with Krishna for more than thirty years and must have intelligence. He puts his questions and doubts not for himself but for the future generations and for the whole of humankind.

Krishna again comes to the point straightaway. He is not creating a philosophy and does not beat around the bush. He declares, 'O Arjuna! Enter not into this degrading weakness, do not behave like this. Come out!'

A small story I read in a magazine recently:

There was a person who had an obsessive-compulsive disorder of tearing up whatever paper he laid his hands on. His family was worried and took him to many psychoanalysts. They spent a lot of money and tried all possible treatments but nothing worked.

One day they read about a young and innovative psychotherapist in the newspaper and decided to try him. The therapist said he wanted to spend a few minutes alone with the patient. He and the patient simply walked up and down for a few minutes, after which the therapist returned and pronounced that the patient was now cured of his malady and could be taken home.

His family was surprised when they found that he really was cured. Even after a year he was found to be perfectly alright. However, no one knew how the problem disappeared. The family returned to the doctor to express their gratitude. They wanted to know what the doctor had really done to cure him of the problem that others could not solve.

He replied that he had simply asked the patient not to tear any more paper and that if he did so even once more, the patient would be brought to the doctor again, whereupon he would be thrown out of the window!

Most of the time our problems are very simple. We complicate them by analyzing them. When we verbalize and analyze a problem, we complicate it and give power to it. Our problems are not as big as we think they are. When we verbalize, analyze, label and categorize them, we have created a whole new problem that had not existed earlier in our being. This is how psychiatrists continue to invent new diseases!

The more we analyze, the more problems and difficulties we create.

The simple and direct approach of the young doctor solved the problem which all the detailed analysis and lying down on couches did not.

You have only one mind. You can either use it to solve the problem, or it will naturally be used to create more problems. Understand that if you are not solving your existing problems, you will be creating more problems. At the level of the mind, there is no position of simply standing, no *status quo* – you either climb or fall.

Here Krishna straightaway addresses Arjuna's problem.

Another small story:

A man walks into a bar with his pet pig. The bartender notices that the pig has a wooden leg. He is surprised that a pig is brought into the bar and that too one with a wooden leg. He asks the customer about the pig's wooden leg. The man realizes that he could cash in on the bartender's curiosity and replies that if he could get a free drink, he would relate the whole story. The bartender agrees.

After the first drink the man says that this is a special pig that saved him, his wife and his family when his house was on fire. The bartender nods but says that he still cannot understand why the pig has a wooden leg. The man replies that he will continue with the story if he gets another free drink.

The bartender agrees. The man says that when he fell into a lake, the pig rushed to his wife, called her and the man was again saved. The bartender is not able to take it anymore. He says he understands that the pig is special but still does not know why it has a wooden leg. The man asks for one more free drink. The bartender agrees to give him one last drink.

The man begins yet another story of how the pig once again saved him from a tornado. The bartender would have no more of it. He catches hold of the man by his neck and demands to know why the pig has a wooden leg.

The man replies calmly, 'Such a special pig! Who could eat it all at once? I'm eating it part by part!'

The man narrated the whole thing as a story that he could have finished in just one line. He must have been a great philosopher!

Here Krishna is not creating any philosophy but gives the answer straightaway in just one line. However, as Arjuna is not mature enough, He has to give an intellectual explanation.

All Western philosophies begin with logical analysis and end with the conclusion. All Eastern processes begin with the conclusion and then give the analysis.

Eastern masters are compassionate. They first give us the option of grasping the solution if we have the intelligence.

If we do not have the intelligence, they have no other option but to go into detailed explanation and analysis.

They expect us to transform with just the trust in them. When they find that we do not have this qualification in us, they start the regular process.

Here Krishna tries the first method of sudden enlightenment, the immediate liberation, but Arjuna is not mature enough to receive it or comprehend it. So Krishna now starts the process of explaining it to him step-by-step.

There are two ways in which people react to the sanctity and divinity of Krishna in Bhagavad Gita.

To one set of people, Krishna has no special qualification to be called divine and these people may not even believe in anything such as the Divine. As atheists or agnostics, the only way such people can be convinced is initially through the rationale of the dialogue in the Gita. The dialogue surpasses anything written in any language at any point in time in its clarity and wisdom. The message of Krishna is universal and timeless. Those who do not accept and understand, it just means that as of now, it is not their time to accept, understand and transform.

The laws of nature do not change just because we do not accept and understand them. The earth was always round and never flat and it always revolved around the sun and not the other way around, even when the societal leaders denied these truths and killed people for expounding these truths.

There is another class of people who say that there is only Krishna, who is divine and all other divine manifestations have no relevance.

One such group of people came to me after I had spoken about the Gita, very perturbed. They said, 'From what you say, we see that you accept the divinity of Krishna.' I said, 'Yes, I very much do. He is the *Pūrṇāvatār*, the complete incarnation.'

They complained, 'Then how can you worship Shiva in your ashram? We believe you have a Dakshinamurthy (Shiva) temple in your Bidadi ashram in India. How can you do this?'

I asked them, 'Have you read Anu Gita which is also another part of Mahabharata?' They said, 'No.'

I then explained to them about Anu Gita: After the war, Arjuna and Krishna are together and Arjuna says, 'Krishna, I do not remember all of what you taught me at the battlefield, when you delivered the Gita to me. Can you please enlighten me again?'

Krishna says, 'Oh, you have forgotten? I too have forgotten what I then said!'

Arjuna exclaims, 'Krishna, how is that possible?'

Krishna says, 'At that point I was *Parabrahma* Krishna, the universal Krishna. I was *Bhagavan*. I was the superconsciousness. I was the Divine. Now, I am Vasudeva Krishna, son of Vasudeva. So, I do not remember what I spoke to you as *Parabrahma* Krishna. I shall try and remember.'

What he remembered and recounted was Anu Gita.

Krishna, as *Parabrahma* Krishna, is the Divine energy, the formless *Brahman*, the same as Shiva, Vishnu or Devi. He is the ultimate Truth, the *Puruṣottama*, as are these other manifestations of the same *Brahman*.

It is only the ignorant cows of Krishna who fight with the equally ignorant monkeys of Rama, forgetting that Rama and Krishna are both the same energy.

Krishna is no doubt the *poornam*, the Whole and the Infinite, as was enunciated in the *Upaniṣads*:

*That is Infinite. This is Infinite. From that Infinite arises this Infinite.*

*If this Infinite is taken out of that Infinite, Infinite still remains Infinite.*

As the Infinite, the *Brahman*, Krishna too, is Vishnu, Shiva, and Devi, as well as all other divine manifestations.

The ultimate energy behind all of them has no name and no form; that is the truth.

The constant, repetitive reference to *Bhagavan* in the Gita is to emphasize this point that Krishna is not just the mere charioteer of Arjuna, Parthasarathy, or

Kesava, destroyer of the demon Keshi or Madhusudana, destroyer of the demon Madhu, but that He is *Parabrahma* Krishna, the supreme energy, who is formless and nameless.

This constant repetition is also to reinforce the concept that *you* too, like Arjuna, are God and no less.

Understanding the divinity of Krishna is a step to accepting and understanding one's own divinity. That awareness is what liberates. That is why Adi Shankaracharya, the enlightened master from India says in the verses of Bhaja Govindam, 'Even a little reading of the Bhagavad Gita will liberate you from death.'



## Pity Is Not Compassion

*Q: Swamiji, you have used the word 'pity' in describing Arjuna's state. Some people call it compassion that does not allow him to fight his kinsmen. Is there a difference?*

There is a huge difference between pity and compassion. Pity is what you feel for someone whom you consider lesser than yourself, such as a beggar. Pity needs an object.

In the dictionary, compassion may be shown as a synonym for pity. It is actually an expression of misunderstanding. Most of us are only capable of pity. Pity arises out of ego, one's identity. We believe that we have to express our superiority to others to prove our worth. Pity arises through comparison. You cannot feel pity unless you place yourself in a situation that is superior to that of the person for whom you feel pity.

Ego breeds violence. Pity has an undertone of violence. Arjuna is in a state of violence. It is his ego that creates the fear in him about the loss of his identity. That fear of loss of identity is being expressed as pity or sympathy for his kinsmen and elders. Arjuna has shifted his focus from the inner self to the outer object. That's all. The fear for his identity has been hidden and expressed as sympathy for his opposition.

For pity to become compassion, ego must disappear. Until then any effort at compassion is only hypocrisy.

Compassion needs no object, it just flows.

Only an enlightened master can express compassion. It is a natural outpouring of his state. It does not matter who is in front of him and in what state they are in. A master expresses and radiates compassion as his very energy.

Compassion is an expression arising out of the experience of boundarilessness. When a person realizes that he is indeed a part of the universal existence and that he too is divine, he automatically becomes a part of all the beings that populate this universe. There is a natural empathy that reaches out to everyone and everything around such a person. This is compassion.

Compassion is possible only when one's ego drops and identity disappears; compassion is the very opposite of pity.

*Q: Krishna uses the term ऋya. People say that Aryans were invaders of the ancient Indian people. Is that true?*

In Sanskrit, the word *ārya* is used to denote a person of true nobility. It is not merely nobility of birth but the expression of noble qualities in one's behavior. This has nothing to do with any foreign invader.

Recent scientific investigations have shown that there was no such *Aryan* invasion of India from European stock. This was misinformation spread by the British colonizers to sow the seeds of separation between the inhabitants of different parts of India. This was their planned strategy to destroy Indian culture.

In fact, they succeeded quite well. For over 60 years this misinformation has turned many people in the south of India into atheists simply because they associated religion with invasion. Just a small part of Tamil Nadu has more temples than almost all of the rest of India, and indigenous kings built these places of worship. But people have been brainwashed to believe that they need to deny their religion to return to their roots.

*Sanatana Dharma*, the *vedic* science, evolved in many parts of India simultaneously. Many religions developed from this science; Hinduism is one of them. Buddhism, Jainism and other such major religions have their roots in the same philosophy.

An *aryan* is one who has a thorough understanding of this *vedic* science. An *aryan* is one who, by understanding the tenets of this science, is able to practice them. An *aryan* is one who by practicing the truths of this noble science, radiates noble and enlightened qualities through his behavior.



*Q: Swamiji, why did Krishna choose the battlefield to deliver the great knowledge of Gita?*

Krishna delivered Gita in a battlefield because planet Earth is a battlefield!

Please be very clear: In the last two thousand years of recorded history, we have fought more than five thousand wars. We are doing nothing except fighting wars. The gap between one war and another cannot be called peace because it is simply the preparation time for the next war!

You do only one of two things, either fight a war or prepare for the next one. If, in the morning, you go to the office after a fight with your spouse, you know by evening that other arguments will be ready! This is the reason planet Earth is a battlefield. This is the reason Krishna chose the battlefield to deliver His message.

There are three game situations on planet Earth - 'win-win', 'win-lose' and 'lose-lose'.

'Win-win' situation is between the master and disciple, where the master wins the disciple and the disciple also wins enlightenment. Both achieve something and neither of them loses. The master does not lose anything as he enjoys the act of giving enlightenment. The disciple too does not lose, as he gets enlightenment.

The next one is the 'win-lose' scenario. All our business dealings are 'win-lose' situations. When somebody wins, the other person loses.

The third situation is the worst of all - 'lose-lose'. Both the parties lose. The battlefield is a 'lose-lose' situation where even the so-called winning is not winning. Krishna delivers Gita in the battlefield because he gives a solution for the worst situations. Even the worst situations in life are addressed by Gita.

The battlefield is indeed the right place to deliver this spiritual message, because if something cannot be used in the worst situations, it cannot be taken as the ultimate message. If it can be used in the worst situation, you can be sure that it can be used anywhere else. It is like a master key. If it can open the most difficult lock, it can open all other locks. Krishna gives life solutions for the worst situations.



## Surrender Is Not Based On Your Convenience

*2.4 Arjuna said:*

*O killer of Madhu, how can I oppose in battle,*

*Bhishma and Drona, who are worthy of my worship?*

*2.5 I would rather beg for my food in this world than kill the most noble of teachers.*

*If I kill them, all my enjoyment of wealth and desires will be stained with blood.*

*2.6 I cannot say which is better; their defeating us or us defeating them.*

*We do not wish to live after slaying the sons of Dhritarashtra who stand before us.*

*2.7 My heart is overwhelmed with pity and my mind is confused about what my duty is.*

*I beg of you, please tell me what is best for me. I am your disciple. Instruct me as I seek refuge in you.*

*2.8 Even if I were to attain unrivalled dominion and prosperity on Earth or even lordship over the Gods,*

*How would that remove this sorrow that burns my senses?*

Despite what Krishna had said to him with total clarity, that Arjuna should get up and fight, Arjuna now recounts all his previous arguments. It is as if he had not heard Krishna at all or not heard him right.

He once again implores Krishna, 'You, as the Lord of the universe, have the right to destroy what you please. You destroyed the demons Madhu and Keshin and you destroyed many other enemies. You are justified because you are the Lord. How can I, a mere mortal, be bold enough to wage war against my grandfather and my teacher, with the intent to kill them? They are ones I should worship, not destroy. I shall be condemned if I fight them.'

He continues, 'It is better for me to seek alms as an ascetic or even a beggar than kill these elders. Once my hands are stained with their blood, how can I enjoy worldly pleasures? I am confused as to which would be better, for them to slay me or for me to slay them? How can we live after slaying our kinsmen and elders?'

Arjuna says further, 'Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of misery and weakness. I can see no solution to my dilemma. Even if I slay these people and gain control over the Earth, or even control over the heavens, what good will it do me? In this condition, I ask you to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am your disciple and the soul is surrendered unto you. Please instruct me.'

I must now tell you an important truth. Here Arjuna says, 'My soul is surrendered unto you.' This is a lie.

Had his soul been truly surrendered to Krishna, he would simply have followed what Krishna said and would not have waited for an intellectual explanation.

I have seen many people in the same situation.

A small story or rather, a piece of history:

One night around midnight I got a call from one of our devotees who was a government officer, pleading for my help for a serious problem. He said that if he could not have my help, suicide was the only alternative for him. I asked him to come the following morning and said that we would do whatever had to be done to take care of his problem. He, however insisted on a solution right then.

After hearing the details of the problem I assured him that his problem would be taken care of, but he should come the following morning anyway, so that the problem could be analyzed properly, and to ensure it did not repeat itself. He replied that coming the following morning was not possible, because he had to go to work!

When he was speaking of his problem, he said his life itself was at my feet and that as my disciple he had surrendered completely and only I could save him. But when I asked him to come on the following day, he said he had to go to office!

Arjuna is in exactly the same position. He says his soul is surrendered to Krishna but when Krishna asks him to do His bidding, he is not ready to do so and is confused!

Surrender out of confusion is not surrender, as you do not even know if you are doing the right thing.

Understand that surrender after clarity of *śāstras*, or intelligence, is true surrender.

Here Arjuna surrenders only verbally as he says that he is confused.

You must either do what you think is right or do as the master instructs.

Here Arjuna wants the master to say what he wants to hear, not what the master wants to say. So, although Arjuna says he has surrendered, he has not done so.

Time and again, people come to me for advice and ask me, '*Swamiji*, I have this problem. Please advise me what to do. Whatever you tell me I shall do.' Then, if I ask them to come to the ashram for a few days or attend a meditation course because I know it will help them, they give me a dozen reasons why it cannot be done. They cite all other important tasks that they need to complete before they undertake anything that I suggest to them.

Some even say, '*Swamiji*, the time has to be right before we do that. Perhaps the time is not right.'

Nonsense... simply nonsense! Understand, you are not controlled by some unknown destiny that you can conveniently blame just because you cannot do something right. Your destiny is in your own hands.

An enlightened master, on the other hand, has no control over what he does. Everything that he does is in the hands of the universal power, *Parāśakti*.

I cannot move a little finger or utter a word without the active direction of the universal energy, but each one of you, every one of you, has the power to decide what you want to do. So does Arjuna.

Arjuna is asking Krishna to tell him what he needs to do in the same way that I just described to you how people come and ask me. If what I tell them is in line with what they want, they will agree. So will Arjuna. Krishna knows this only too well.

However, only out of compassion, Krishna continues to express and teach him the Truth. Here begins the *śāstra*. The two verses that Krishna speaks are *sutra*, techniques. But as Arjuna is not ready to receive them, he has to commence the *śāstra*, the background knowledge.

At this point Arjuna has not yet completely surrendered to Krishna. He is confused. He is in dilemma. He knows that his duty is to defeat his enemies and kill them if needed, but his enemies are his kinsmen, his elders and his teachers. The relationship, the *saṁskāra* of his relationship with them, makes him hesitate. Arjuna brings up all that he knows from scriptures, from tradition and from hearsay, doing whatever he can to avoid the unpleasant decision to fight his own kith and kin.

Krishna, fully aware of his dilemma, moves forward in his mission to destroy that identity. The master is a surgeon who removes the cancer of ego. This is what Krishna does throughout the Gita dialogue. To give Arjuna credit, he stays through this surgery. Many weaker men would have run away from the operation theatre, this battlefield, with no desire to let go of their identities. The greatness of Arjuna lies in his determination to listen to his master and be guided by him.

So he implores his master, 'Krishna, please tell me what to do. I am your disciple. You are my refuge.'

It is this readiness to surrender to the master that redeems Arjuna and helps him win the war, which in reality is the war within himself.

This is the war that each one of us is fighting each day, if we are truly aware. This is the war that we need to fight to drop our ego, our mind, and the identity that binds us to all the bondages upon this earth.

Whatever you think is yours and whatever you think is you, is different from the truth.

It is the master who can lead you through the path of this self-discovery, as Krishna is now leading Arjuna.

To be led, you need the attitude of surrender.



## The Master Is Your Bridge To Divinity

*Q: Swamiji, how does the Guru help the disciple? What is the process?*

The whole Gita is the answer to this question. The whole Gita is the process. It starts with the master providing the intellectual clarity, then giving the experience, taking the disciple through the whole path and putting him in the same consciousness in which the master lives. The whole Gita explains the process, and if you listen to it, you will be able to understand the whole process. The whole Gita is the answer to your question.

Guru, the master, is the link between God and humanity. Seeing the state of the master, the disciple gets encouraged and feels that he too can elevate himself to that level and that he too can aspire. That is why time and again I tell you all, I am not here to prove my divinity; I am here to prove your divinity.

The very mission of a guru is to remove the layer of ignorance that surrounds you, which prevents you from seeing your own divine nature. That is what the word 'guru' means; it means, leading from darkness to light, from ignorance to wisdom, to the wisdom of who you really are.

The Guru can assist with a glance, with a touch, with a word, without a word, in many ways, to gift his grace upon you. This is what is referred to as *dīkṣa* or initiation. This is the process of bestowing his grace upon the initiate. All that the disciple needs to do is to accept with an open mind. But that is the difficult part.

The Original Sin that the Old Testament refers to is the loss of memory of their divine nature by Adam and Eve. It is a sin that a master can rectify. He can restore you to your divine nature, if you let him.

This is what Krishna does for Arjuna through the course of His teaching in the Gita. He listens to Arjuna patiently, answers his questions, clarifies his doubts, chides him as needed and finally reveals to him His own true form.

The nature of the Guru is compassion. He is not satisfied until the disciple is liberated. The only way for liberation is the destruction of all ego. That is the painful part. The process therefore becomes a surgery, with the master as the master surgeon. The disciple who has the wisdom to realize this, undergoes the surgery and realizes himself.

*Q: When will Gita be accepted universally as a scripture?*

There is a book written by Dr. David Hawkins, a renowned psychiatrist, about a system that evaluates the absolute truth of a scripture or a person through a scientifically validated system. In this, he rates Gita at the highest level of truth.

When you are open to the truths propounded in the Gita, they penetrate your being with an energy that no other literature can match. That is why I call Gita a *śāstra*, *stotra* and *sūtra*; a scripture of wisdom, a devotional book and a book of techniques, all combined in one.

There is an ancient Chinese book called I Ching that people in China use as a guide. They either open a page at random or use sticks to generate the page number to obtain an answer to the problem that troubles them. They use it as a book of predictions. Many Christians use the Bible in this manner. Gita can be used in a similar way. Gita will answer any and all of your questions. It is the ultimate book of truth.

*Q: Why is Krishna wasting His time with Arjuna? Again and again Arjuna is coming up with the same questions. Obviously Arjuna does not have what it takes to understand the truth.*

Arjuna is not only the representation of all of humanity in the Mahabharata and Gita, but he is also a prince.

As a human being Arjuna has all the weaknesses that all of us possess in the body and the mind. These are the weaknesses, the conditioned memories or *saṁskāras* that are being released, as he is in dialogue with Krishna. This is the reason why Krishna is so patient with Arjuna. The entire humanity is in need of the compassion of the master.

As a prince and warrior, Arjuna is ego incarnate. There is a saying in Tamil, and I am sure in other languages too, that only when a fruit is ripe can it fall. Unless the ego is ripe it cannot be dropped. People who practice humility without understanding will carry negative ego with them and it will be impossible to drop it.

A small story:

Birbal was a very wise man, a minister in the court of the great Moghul emperor Akbar.

One day Akbar asked Birbal to bring the four biggest fools of the kingdom to him.

Birbal started looking for fools. He saw a man carrying a large plate on his head. It had some clothes, food and toys. Birbal asked the man where he was going. The man said that he was taking this to his wife who had left him, remarried and now had a child from her new husband. These were gifts for the child.

Birbal was happy to find this fool to take to Akbar.

The next day Birbal saw a man traveling with a donkey, the man carrying a bundle of grass on his head. Birbal asked him why he was holding the bundle instead of tying it to the donkey. The man said that his donkey was pregnant so he did not want to overload the animal!

Birbal was happy to find another fool to take to Akbar.

The next morning Birbal took both these men to Akbar and introduced them, describing how he found them. Akbar asked: I told you to bring four fools. Where are the other two?

With folded hands Birbal said: Sire, the third fool brought you the two fools. The fourth asked for them!



Akbar was a wise and humorous man. He laughed and sent all of them away with gifts. He was a king who had everything except ego.

A prince has all the powers to do anything he wishes. When he decides to drop his mind he will apply the same energy and the same focus to this effort as he does to every other undertaking in his life. Some of the most celebrated sages of our ancient culture were kings, like Janaka for example. When a king detaches himself from the outcome and focuses on the path and process, there can be no one more powerful.

Krishna is exemplifying humanity and the select class of humanity through Arjuna.

*Q: You have been critical of philosophers. Isn't it a bit unfair? There have been many great philosophers who have contributed highly to human consciousness.*

When philosophers contribute to enhancement of human consciousness, they are no longer philosophers; they become teachers and sages.

You may think I am playing with words but I am not. From time immemorial you will find two classes of scholars; one, who taught based on their inner and outer experience, with deep honesty and respect for the other person. Then there were those whose teachings and writings were based partially on reading and partially on observing others. They had not internalized what they read or observed and they had no inner experience of what they propounded. I call this latter class of scholars as philosophers.

To observe others partially and selectively requires no intelligence. One has already formed a hypothesis; one has already made a judgment. All that one does is collect evidence to support that hypothesis and judgment. If one finds any evidence to the contrary, it is ignored. Most modern research works seem to be done this way. That is why there is so much controversy in the academic field.

Sigmund Freud declared that man is unhappy by nature. This is because he never met any enlightened master. He had already made up his mind that all humans were unhappy and his mission was to collect evidence to prove this. Freud's colleague and friend, Carl Jung came to India, heard about Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the great enlightened sage, but did not meet him. He later

admitted that he was scared to meet this blissful enlightened master for fear that his hypothesis and life's work would be demolished!

Rene Descartes, the renowned French philosopher, single handedly established the Western philosophy of rationalism. 'I think, therefore I am,' he said. It is a pity that an intelligent man like him did not want to go deeper and understand that it is only when you stop thinking that you understand who you are. Until then you are a mere plaything in the hands of your mind. You are the slave of your mind, not its master. What is there to be proud of in being a slave?

Of course there were men like Socrates, the Greek philosopher, who were willing to sacrifice their own lives for their convictions. Such people surely enhanced human consciousness and are to be ranked as sages.

*Q: When Arjuna says that he cannot attack his revered teachers like Drona and Bhishma, is he not saying what needs to be said by any intelligent and righteous person?*

You are right. That is the reason why Arjuna says what he says.

Arjuna knows that he will be evaluated at a later period by humanity based on his behavior towards his elders and teachers. People will say, 'What kind of a person was this? He claimed to be a noble and righteous prince and great warrior and yet he went ahead and killed his teachers.' Arjuna is trying to protect himself, his reputation, his name and fame; he is protecting his identity. He is issuing a disclaimer: 'I am not responsible for killing my teachers. I said so in public. This Krishna made me kill them.'

If Arjuna truly had such respect for his elders and teachers, he would not have come as far as the battlefield. In fact, Yudhishtira never wanted to fight. He was persuaded to fight by his brothers. His brothers wanted vengeance. Draupadi wanted to be avenged. Arjuna wanted the kingdom. Had Arjuna been aware and conscious he would have done one of two things; either he would not have come into the battlefield or he would have attacked his enemies without any mercy. Here he stands confused, torn between greed and fear. Arjuna is just being human.

Metaphorically speaking, Arjuna, like all of us, is bound by his conditioning of respect towards elders and teachers. Bhishma represents the *saṁskāras* (engraved

memories) towards elders, and Drona represents the *saṁskāras* towards teachers. Both these *saṁskāras* need to be destroyed before he can move towards the ultimate Truth. As long as one is ruled by this conditioning of elders and teachers, it is impossible to find one's own truth. Truth conveyed by anyone else, even an enlightened master, must be internalized through one's own experience before it can become one's own truth. Even a master can only guide; he can light the lamp to drive out the ignorance; but the realization must happen within oneself.



## Time Is Psychological, Not Chronological

*2.9 Sanjaya said:*

*Arjuna then said to Krishna, 'Govinda, I shall not fight,' and fell silent.*

*2.10 Krishna smilingly spoke the following words to the grief-stricken Arjuna, as they were placed in the middle of both armies.*

*2.11 Bhagavan said:*

*You grieve for those who should not be grieved for and yet, you speak words of wisdom.*

*The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.*

*2.12 It is not that at any time in the past I did not exist; so did you and these rulers exist,*

*And we shall not ever cease to be hereafter.*

*2.13 Just as the spirit in this body passes through childhood, youth and old age,*

*So does it pass into another body; the man centered within himself does not fear this.*

Even though it is written here in the past tense, I feel Krishna should always be addressed in the present tense. He is still relevant to each of us today. We cannot say, 'Krishna *was*' but 'Krishna *is*'; not 'Krishna *said*' but 'Krishna *says*'.

Once again, having lamented about what he is being forced to do, and not wishing to do what he is expected to do, Arjuna, like a petulant child sits down saying, 'I am not going to fight.' It is as if Arjuna is waiting to be persuaded.

He is seeking an explanation.

Krishna says to him gently and smilingly, 'While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor for the dead.'

Again, Krishna addresses the issue directly, 'O Arjuna! You speak as if you are intelligent, enlightened. You speak the words without having experienced them. Therefore, your words do not carry conviction.

Your emotion, your being, shows that you are not enlightened, that you have not understood, that you have not experienced. A truly enlightened person will never worry for the living or the dead.'

If you worry for somebody living or dead, you cannot be an intelligent person. What is death and life after all? There are thousands, rather millions, who have lived and gone.

Someone once asked me, 'Why is it that natural calamities happen? Why is it that so many people die in wars and calamities? Why is God doing these things and why is God being mean?'

I told him, 'To give you an honest answer, I do not know. But if you insist on an answer, I can give you an answer the next time God calls for a conference. I can ask Him to give me an answer!'

These questions have no answer in Existence. The question is asked from a very low level, from your logic, but God is beyond your logic.

You can never have an answer for these questions.

For example, a small ant asks the elephant, 'Why are you as dark as I am? How is it that we both have the same skin color?' Will the elephant be able to answer? The elephant will not even know that it is being asked this question. He will not even be aware of the ant or its question!

Likewise, it is important to understand the rules of Existence, of the Divine.

Only the ignorant worry about people who are living or dead. A truly intelligent person does not bother about death.

Often people ask me, 'How was the universe created? Was it by Brahma, as Hindu scriptures say? Or was it created in six days by a nameless God as said in the Old Testament?'

I say to them what Buddha said thousands of years ago based on his personal perception. 'The universe,' Buddha said, 'has neither been created nor will it ever be destroyed. It always has been.'

The universe created itself. It is the creation that embodies the creator and results in what has been created.

Our questions regarding the 'right' and 'wrong' of what happens around us arise only when they threaten us in some manner or another. These questions, these issues about the morality of the universe, spring forth only when our ego is threatened, when our identity is threatened, when our life is threatened.

Every person stricken with an incurable and fatal affliction such as cancer, would invariably ask the question, 'Why me?' If it is a young child, then certainly the parents, relatives and friends are bound to question the justice and fairness of God.

What do we know about the fairness of God? What do we know at all about God? All we know and care about is our own welfare. All we wish is to be secure in the comforts of our own well-being and that of our near and dear ones. Any concern about the rest of humanity is only after one's own comfort zone is managed.

The creator is also the destroyer. What is created will be destroyed. We have no agreement with God that when we are born we will be assured of so many years of life along with the knowledge of the timing and nature of our death.

When you truly realize your Self, when you are enlightened, you will be aware of when you will die and how you will die. It will then make no difference to you whether your body is alive or dead. Living and dying are no longer issues in which you feel you need to play a part. They are progressions of nature and being enlightened, you flow with nature.

We are just playing with words when we talk about *karma* and destiny, saying that they are responsible for everything that happens to us and for everything that we do.

Let me tell you this: We are responsible for what happens to us. We are responsible for what we do. It is a misrepresentation of Nature's law to blame nature for what happens to us.

Earthquakes and tsunamis occur because man has plundered Nature. Looking for oil and minerals, we have drilled tunnels tens of thousands of meters into the bowels of the Earth, on land and in the ocean. We have ruthlessly destroyed forests

and hills. We have drilled holes through the ozone layer in search of our comfort zone. Then we wonder why Nature misbehaves. Nature only behaves. She never misbehaves.

Nature does not guarantee that the person who creates havoc and destroys will suffer in that body. Nature is patient and all knowing. Nature's law strikes without fear or favor. What one generation does to destroy Nature may impact another generation. From Nature's standpoint we never die. We just disappear and reappear. In whichever scene we reappear, we still bear responsibility for what we have done in an earlier scene.

That's why questions of why a ten-year-old should die or contract cancer have neither meaning nor relevance. The ten-year-old is only the reappearance of someone who has been here before and probably will reincarnate to be here again. We are not normally aware of what one has done before and what one is therefore responsible for.

Some people question, 'Is it fair that we are held responsible for what we did in another lifetime and are not even aware of now?'

What do we mean by fairness? What do we know of fairness except what we determine to be fair out of our own selfishness? It is possible to be conscious of what one has done in previous births; it is even possible to have a conscious birth, coming into this world fully conscious and aware. Before that happens, we need to drop our ego and merge with Nature. We need to surrender our existence to Nature. When we do so, Nature responds and opens up.

Sanjaya says Krishna was smiling as He uttered these words. Krishna must have been laughing at Arjuna. 'You fool, you pretend to be wise and quote the scriptures. Who do you think you are quoting the scriptures to? What can you understand of what I Myself have said?'

Krishna continues: 'Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you and all these kings, and never in the future shall any of us cease to be.'

With this verse begins the essence of the whole Gita.

This is the gist of the whole Gita. This is *ātmajñāna*, Self Realization. If you can understand this one verse, you can become enlightened straightaway and enter into eternal bliss.

Krishna says there was never a time when I, you and all the kings did not exist. If you think our souls will also die with our bodies, you are wrong. We were

there before our birth and will remain after death. It is not true that any of us will not be in the future.

In Zen Buddhism, there is a beautiful meditation technique to achieve enlightenment.

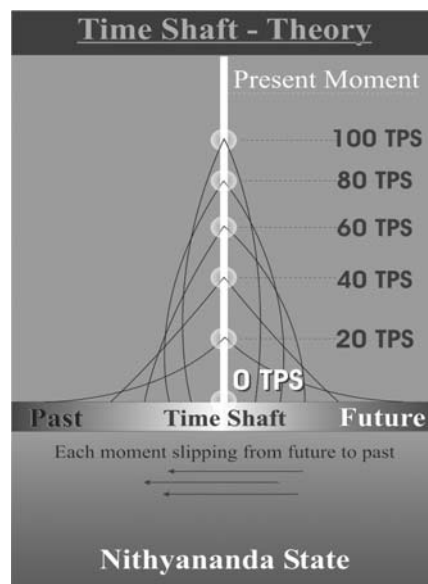
You are asked to meditate on the face you had before your birth. The *koan* or *sutra*, a technique for meditation, says, 'What was your face like before your father and mother were born?'

Upon meditating on this *koan* you realize that you existed in the past, exist in the present and will exist in the future. Your face and body may change but you continue to exist. Then why do we think we will die and why do we fear death? If what Krishna says is true, why are we worried about this life and about death? You need to first understand the concept of the past, present and future to enable you to understand what Krishna says.

Let me explain this concept first.

Time is like a shaft continuously moving from the future on the right into the past on the left (see diagram). The future is on your right and the past is on your left. The future is continuously moving into the past; every moment and every second it is turning into the past. The present is the point where the future and the past meet. Your mind as such is nothing but movements between the past and the future.

You cannot have any thoughts if you stop thinking about the past and the future. Your thoughts consist of nothing but the constant movements between the past and the future. The more your thoughts shift from past to future or future to past, the higher the frequency of thoughts. The less you shift from past to future or future to past, the lesser the number of thoughts. Try to think of something in the present, you will find that you cannot. You can think of it only by taking it into the past or future. You are either worrying about the future or remembering the past.





The higher the frequency of thoughts, the more you are caught in the physical and material world.

For example, if you have 100 Thoughts Per Second (TPS), it means you have jumped 100 times back and forth between the past and future in one second! If you have 80 TPS, it means you have jumped 80 times between these two dimensions. The higher the frequency, the more you will be away from the present. The higher the frequency of thoughts, the more worries and problems you have. If the number of thoughts reduces, you fall into the present moment.

The *Upaniṣads* talk of these five body layers called *kośas*. When your frequency of thoughts is high, you are in the physical body or the grossest layer called *annamaya kośa*. When the frequency is a little less, you move into a higher energy layer called *prāṇamaya kośa*. When your TPS is say 60 (here the reference is just proportional), you move into the mental layer or *manomaya kośa*. When the TPS is still less, say 40, you enter the pleasure layer or the *viññānamaya kośa*; you come a little close to the soul. If you fall into the present moment, you are in the innermost layer, that is the *ānandamaya kośa*; you are *ātman* or the soul.

The past, present and future, all the three put together are eternal, *nitya* or *ātman*. Only when you come to the present moment do you experience *ātman* – your true Self, but as of now you are constantly shuttling between the past and future.

When the number of thoughts reduces, you will not even be aware of the passage of time. For example, when you are with someone you love, even two or three hours will seem like a short while. On the contrary, when you are with someone whose company is boring, even a short time seems very long. You will keep glancing at your watch and wondering why time does not move!

Time is more psychological than chronological. That is why, in our scriptures or *Vedas*, we have the word *kṣaṇa* to describe the unit of time. *Kṣaṇa* does not denote one second, but is defined as the gap or time interval between two thoughts. The larger the *kṣaṇa* or the gap between two thoughts, the more in the present we are. Each person's *kṣaṇa* will be different depending on how busy his mind is! Normally, our *kṣaṇa* will be in the range of microseconds because we are continuously flooded with thoughts.

When our TPS is lower, we will naturally be in ecstasy, in bliss. When our thoughts are less, we do not know how much time has passed and we live in

heaven. When the number of our thoughts is high, we are in hell. Hell and heaven are nothing but the number of thoughts that we entertain, that's all. That is why I say heaven and hell are not geographical places, but psychological spaces.

With a higher frequency of thoughts, you are in hell, caught in the physical layer; you think you are the body. When the frequency of thoughts reduces, you think you are the mind and just emotion. When the thoughts become zero, you realize you are *ātman* - Self; you are there in the past, present and future. Only a man whose TPS is zero can realize what Krishna says - You will be there forever. The past, present and future are just words; you exist throughout.

But right now the frequency of thoughts is very high. You do not have the patience or the energy to understand who you are, your base and your nature. When you fall into the present moment, you experience that you were there in the past, are in the present and will be in the future. Krishna says, 'You were there in the past, you are in the present and you will be in the future; you do not die.'

When He says that, He means that you are *nitya ātman*, eternal consciousness; you are beyond your mind and body. But you are restless and know only this space of moving from past to future, that is why you are unable to believe that this space of the present exists within you. You are away from the present moment, away from the eternal consciousness, therefore unable to see the truth of eternal consciousness. The higher the TPS, the farther away you are from the present and from there, you cannot see it clearly. When your TPS comes down, you can see and experience your nature more clearly, more deeply.

When Krishna says, 'You are the eternal soul', He means that as a being, you are beyond time, but as of now, you are caught in the mind between the past and the future.

He says beautifully, 'There was never a time when I, you and all these kings did not exist. If you think that our souls will also die along with our bodies, you are wrong. We existed before our birth and will remain after our death. It is also not true that any of us will not be in the future.' We *will* be in the future as there is no death of our being or consciousness. Whatever dies, can never live. Whatever lives can never die.'

Here, your deep consciousness says that something is living in you. This quality you attribute to your body and mind. Do not misunderstand your consciousness to be your body and mind.

You are not the body or the mind. As long as you are caught in the past and the future, you think that you are the body and mind. The moment you come down to the present moment, you experience that you are beyond the body, beyond the mind.

Krishna does not mean that we existed in the form that we are here now, or that He was present always as Krishna in the form we imagine Him to be, with a flute in His hand and a peacock feather on His head. He means that our spirits which are eternal, always existed and will always exist. In our spiritual state, that of our soul, we are divine, one with the universal energy, *Brahman*.

The gist of the second chapter is that you are the soul, that you are divine and that you are God.

Even as the spirit resides in this body, the body passes through its seasons of childhood, youth, middle age and old age as the seasons of Nature do in each year. Finally, it passes through death, and then reappears, just as trees shed leaves in autumn and produce new leaves in spring.

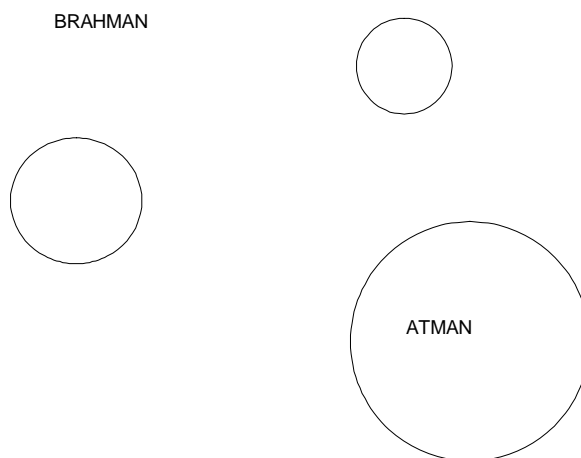
Transition of the spirit through the body as it ages is no different from the transition of time through the seasons. One does not grieve as one enjoys the pleasures of childhood, youth and middle age. Why then should one grieve the onset of old age and then death?

At death, the spirit passes from one body into another body. It has three *kṣaṇa* to achieve this, each *kṣaṇa* being the time period between thoughts. A person who is in a high thought frequency state, a high TPS state, has a much shorter time to shift from one body to another compared to another person whose TPS is low, whose frequency of thoughts is low.

A person in a no-mind, no-thought state has infinite time, as the time between thoughts is infinite. His spirit is at liberty to stay free without taking another body as long as he chooses, or more correctly, as the universe chooses.

All enlightened masters are in this category. When the spirit leaves the mind-body system, it becomes one with the universal energy.

Imagine a number of circles drawn on a whiteboard. Think of the whiteboard space as the universal energy. Individual body-mind systems are represented by the circles drawn on the whiteboard. The white space enclosed in the circles is the spirit and this is the same energy as the white space outside the circles. The space within is the individual soul, and the space outside is *brahman*.



When a body-mind dies, when an individual dies, all that happens is that these perimeter lines get erased, that is all. The space within the circle merges with the space outside the circle. White merges with white. Energy merges with energy.

When the spirit, the energy, is ready to move into another mind-body system, it enters another circle. It is a continuous, ongoing process and a natural process. One who understands this process and accepts it is an integrated person. Krishna refers to him as a '*dhīraḥ*', one who is firm, centered and aware.



## When You Mourn, You Mourn For Yourself

*Q: The question I have is about the past and the future. This has to do with astrologers and palmists who tell us our past and future. Some of them are correct and some of them are wrong. Does astrology have validity?*

A: See, if you are sitting in a low point or a valley, can you see what is there at a distance? You cannot. That is how it is when your thoughts crowd your mind and the TPS (thoughts per second) is high. If you sit higher or closer you can see a little more clearly, like the Indian television Doordarshan! Closer still, with fewer thoughts, you can see still more clearly like a private television channel. From up close, you can see like your own personal computer.

A person with a low TPS can see very clearly. He can see through time. He can predict your past and future properly and clearly. If the person's TPS is high, he cannot predict at all because his mind is constantly moving between past and future. A person who has established himself in the *nitya ātman* or eternal consciousness can not only predict but also *change* the future!

There is a beautiful verse in the *vedic* scriptures that says that all the letters of your destiny so painstakingly written by Brahma, the Lord of Creation, on your forehead, can simply be erased by the Master's left toe when the Master casually walks past! The man who is established in the eternal consciousness can recreate the future.

Astrology, *Jyotiṣa* in Sanskrit, and any form of prediction, whether palmistry or tarot cards, is not so much about the science as it is about what state the individual who predicts is in. Yes, astrology is a science and it is based on valid principles of how the universal energy field affects individuals. In the *vedic* culture, astrology was rarely used beyond adolescence and even then only as a guidance to evaluate the aptitude of a student. A guru at the *gurukul - vedic* school, used

astrology to determine the aptitude and potential of a young student, much as you would use SAT tests today, the Student Aptitude Tests.

Using astrology to decide what you have to do day after day is a misuse of that knowledge. When you understand that you are part of the flow of the cosmic energy, which is what astrology teaches, you need to have the intelligence to flow with that energy and allow what happens to happen.

*Q: How can we not grieve for the dead? Perhaps it is possible for Krishna and great masters like you, but for ordinary mortals this is not feasible.*

Please understand that you not only grieve for the dead but for the living as well. Constantly you grieve, you suffer, you regret because you expect and you get attached. Do you grieve for those who you think are evil? You celebrate, don't you? You only grieve for those who are close to you, those whom you consider your possessions.

What you grieve for has to be connected with the 'I' and 'mine', otherwise there is no grief. Grief can arise only from your perceived loss. You feel pain only when you think you have lost something you consider valuable. It need not be death; it can be anything that you consider you must have and you feel you are losing. It could be material possessions, relationships, name and fame and many other things that are totally insignificant but have assumed serious value for you because of your attachment to them.

If you truly are compassionate and you think that death is a punishment, you should grieve for all who die, be it a gangster or a murderer. No, your grief is selective and judgmental. That grief also happens whenever something does not go the way you wish for yourself and those whom you are attached to.

You may ask what is wrong with that behavior. What is wrong with that behavior is that it brings you grief! Instead of centering in on your blissful natural state, you settle into an unnatural state of grief and sorrow. What is it that brings about this state of sorrow?

All your grief for someone's death arises out of selfishness, nothing else. The person who has died has gone. He no longer has any problems. You have problems about that person leaving you. So you grieve. Psychologists say that the mourning process goes through stages of grief and anger before there is acceptance. Both grief and anger arise from selfish reasons.

The newly widowed lady was loudly lamenting her loss. Neighbors were surprised because she always quarreled with her husband and every day would curse him to die.

‘You are now free’, they said, ‘you can do what you want. Why are you crying?’

The lady asked, ‘But who will I curse now?’ and wailed some more!

In the case of Arjuna, his grieving is based on his perceived attachment to his kinsmen and elders and the fear of losing them. Ultimately this fear is related to the fear of losing himself and his identity. Krishna gets him out of this primal fear of losing his identity by showing Arjuna that he is much bigger than his body-mind.

So it is with all of us. We are all far greater than our body-mind systems. When the body and mind perish at death, we do not perish. Our energy lives on and reappears in another body again as matter. What is there to grieve once you understand this simple truth?

Everyone can understand and accept this truth. What is feasible for Arjuna is feasible for you. What was feasible for me is feasible for you. What is the alternative? What is the point in wallowing in sorrow when you can be liberated into bliss?

*Q : You said earlier that you are repeating Gita. Do you mean you are Krishna? Many proclaim they are God. Are you also in the same business?*

Nice question! I am not here to proclaim that *I* am God. I am here to proclaim that *you* are God. When Krishna says he is God and proclaims or proves His divinity, He creates a situation and prepares you to receive His message and realize that you too are divine. That is why Krishna has to prove and express his divinity.

So understand that I am not here to prove that *I* am God, I am here to show that *you* are God. If you can experience that you are God, it is enough; nothing more is necessary. You do not need to accept or believe I am God. You do not even need to bother about my divinity. Just understand and experience that you are God; nothing more is necessary.

I answered a question earlier on the process of the Guru-disciple relationship. I said that the Guru is a bridge between man and God. This bridge is a short cut. It is not essential that you use this bridge. There are masters who have realized themselves, who realized the truth of their divinity, without any external assistance from another master. I am one myself.

Understand, this is not a business. Business implies that there is some kind of a two-way transaction. As I mentioned earlier, any business is a win-lose relationship. One has to lose if the other wins. A Guru-disciple relationship is a win-win relationship. Neither can lose.

If a master treats his mission as a business, it will be a lose-lose relationship, similar to warfare. The Guru will not gain ultimately. In fact from a psychic perspective he will invite deep suffering. The disciple of course will be misled and will suffer.

How does one determine whether one is with the right master? More importantly, how does one determine whether the master, however good he may be, is the right one for you?

Ask my disciples and they can tell you. Whatever I say may not be convincing to you, since your query itself is one of doubt.

Some say that all questions that they have just disappear when they come in front of me, like dewdrops in front of the morning sun. Many ask me at first how they can remember me, what should they focus on? I tell them, 'If I am truly your master, your problem will not be in trying to remember me, but in forgetting me!'

There are others who tell me that for the first time they felt they had come home. They had been searching ceaselessly, not even knowing what it was that they were searching for, and suddenly the search ended. It was a deep feeling of fulfillment, as if they had come home.

Spirituality can never be a business. It is a mission. It is a mission of compassion. What a master gives is unconditional, with no expectation of return.

You say I implied I am God. I am one with the divine energy; so are you. The difference is that I am aware of this truth; perhaps you need to realize this truth. When you do, there will be no difference between you and me.

For you the word God is a mere concept, something intangible. All you are focused on is your identity - your name, your status, your family etc. Without these



you think you are nobody. You cannot introduce yourself to anyone else in any other way except through your material identity.

To me, God is reality. Every movement I make is with the permission of Existence. I am part and parcel of that Existence. I am aware every moment that I am one with that Existence. This body means nothing to me. Even my name is borrowed. The clothes that I wear are as irrelevant as my skin is to me. Every home on this planet is my home.

When you reach that awareness, you too will realize that you are nothing short of divine, that you too are God.

This is my mission. My mission is to create that personal transformation in individuals so that they too realize that they are God, and nothing less.

***Q: Is death the thoughtless state that you talked about? Does that mean death is the ultimate present moment?***

The thoughtless, no mind state is beyond death and beyond life. Death is a mere rite of passage. It is a transition between one life and another. As I explained, the spirit has only three *kṣaṇas* to leave one body and take up another. When the spirit is without body and mind, it has no thoughts. It is the body-mind system that is responsible for creation of thoughts.

Death can become a permanent passage into liberation and a celebration if you are prepared to let go. If you let go of all your attachments and all your desires, your inner space becomes pure. It can then merge effortlessly with the outer cosmic energy.

I described this earlier by drawing circles on a whiteboard. The whiteboard is the *brahman*, universal energy and the space within the circles is *ātman*, individual energy. In a situation where the inner space is pure, the space within the circles seamlessly merges with the space outside. There is no distinction. There is no taint that separates the inner space from the outer space when the body-mind perimeter disappears. The spirit that leaves the body does not have to look for another body to move into. It stays in the thoughtless pure energy space.

Thoughts, memories and desires are all creations of matter. They are part of the body-mind system. Bodies buried after death can still hold these memories. That is

why people see spirit forms in burial locations. One of the reasons that Hindu customs require the body to be burnt after death is to remove these memories. Only the bodies of enlightened beings are buried under Hindu customs since these are no longer matter but pure energy. Many Hindu temples are built on such final resting spots, *jīva samādhi*, of enlightened masters and still radiate the enlightenment energy.

The thoughtless state can be achieved while living. One does not have to wait until death to reach the present moment! Meditation is the key to the thoughtless state. Meditation brings you to the present moment. This is the reason why meditation is often equated to death.

Through meditation you touch your inner space. You realize that you are no longer merely the body-mind that perishes, but the undying spirit. When that realization happens you are indeed reborn. You come out of the womb of knowledge, *jñāna garbha*. Until then you have only experienced *bhū garbha*, the physical womb.

Death is a rite of passage. Krishna says that in the same manner as the body passes through infancy, childhood, youth and middle age into old age, it also passes into death and then into another body. Shakespeare has described this beautifully in his piece 'All the world is a stage' in his play 'As You Like It'. He talks about the seven stages of life from the crying infant through the reluctant school going child, and finally to the old man, as seven acts in a play. This wise poet rightly compares life to a play and each stage in life as an act in the play.

Adi Shankaracharya in the verses of his Bhaja Govindam says that even when the hair is white, the teeth are gone and the old man needs a stick just to stand, he is full of desires! The problem is that we cannot accept getting old and leaving the body. As children we are all rushing to grow up and be adults and there we would like to stay. It does not work like that. The body-mind is dying every second and is getting reborn every second. Of the many trillion cells that we have in our system, many millions die every second and as we grow older some do not get replaced. This is a biological fact.

What is there to worry about it? You throw away a piece of cheese when it gets old and moldy. However much you may like that cheese, if you have any intelligence, you do not frame it and gaze at it, but just throw it away and move on. Treat your body the same way. You do not own it. Don't get attached to it. You are only a tenant in the body. Your spirit is the owner. Identify with your

spirit. Forget about the body. When it gets to be a problem, when it is time to leave, just leave without packing your bags. There is no need to pack for where you are going. You will be provided for.

Yogi Baba was sowing seeds in his garden. His wife watched him for a while and saw that he was planting the seeds faster and faster as he went along.

‘Yogi,’ she cried out, ‘What is the hurry, why don’t you plant more carefully and slowly?’

‘Oh no, I cannot,’ Yogi shouted back. ‘I don’t have too many seeds left and I have to finish before I run out of seeds!’

We are just like Yogi. The seeds will take care of themselves. Whether you plant slower or faster, there are only a certain number of seeds in the bag. When you finish this bag of seeds, another will come to you. Where is the rush?

Death is not the only present moment. Every second of your life is a present moment to savor and treasure. It is because we do not live life in the present moment that we are afraid to let go. This is why we are afraid of death.

*Q: Why is it that we do not have memories of our past lives? It would be so easy to know what to do if we knew what mistakes we made in our past lives.*

Please believe me, you are very much better off not knowing what happened in your past lives!

What you have experienced and remember in this life itself is enough to drive you crazy. Why do you want to remember what you did in other bodies earlier? Nature is being kind to you by letting you not remember all this.

What happens is this: When the body experiences death and the spirit leaves the body, the spirit travels through seven layers of energy starting from the physical body layer. In each layer it experiences emotions and memories associated with that layer. When it reaches the subtle body layer, the fourth layer, all the painful memories of the past life surface. Immediately after this, the spirit enters the fifth layer, the causal energy body, and the body-mind goes into a coma. This layer is the layer of darkness which people experience when they go through Near Death

Experiences (NDE). The light they see at the end of this layer is the sixth layer of energy, the cosmic energy layer.

The fifth layer or causal energy body is when the spirit detaches from the body. Until this point, the spirit has the option to return to the body-mind. That is how many people come back to life after having been in coma for years. They had stayed in their causal layer. Once the spirit crosses this layer into the cosmic layer, it has no option but to move on.

If it is a spirit that has fulfilled all the desires in its lifetime, it moves on to the final energy layer of *nirvanic* energy. A spirit which has not yet fulfilled the desires with which it took birth originally, will move into another body to fulfill these desires. The spirit will seek a body that has similar inclinations in terms of environment, culture, parental background and so on.

When the spirit moves through the pain and coma in the fourth and fifth layers, all memories of the previous life are lost along with the body-mind. This passage through the darkness of the fifth or causal layer corresponds to the passage through the mother's womb. This is the point at which the spirit enters the new body. This is the reason why you do not remember what you experienced in your past lives.

However, there are points in everyone's lives when some experiences are recovered when a state of intuition is reached. Suddenly when your TPS drops, that is suddenly when you touch a low thought-frequency state, you enter into intuition. Such experiences are recounted by Dr. Brian Weiss and others in their work with regression of people into past lives, using techniques to induce such states.

In general, such adventures into past life memories may be quite harmful unless undertaken by someone who is spiritually aware and understands the implications. Someone who is spiritually aware may be able to use less harmful techniques to heal a person without having to put them through past life experiences.

There are people who say that Existence is not fair in subjecting them to *karma* (unfulfilled actions from their past) and the effects of *karma*, without their being aware of what brought about that *karma*. All I can say is that there is no such thing as fairness in Existence as these people imply. Existence just is. It does not judge. It is you who causes what happens to you. There is no accident in nature. Everything is an incident caused by another incident.

Nature is protecting you by helping you not remember all your past memories. If you did, your entire life would be spent on a psychiatrist's couch!



## The Only Reality In Life Is Impermanence

*2.14 O son of Kunti, contact with sense objects causes heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and these have a beginning and an end.*

*O Bharata, these are not permanent; endure them bravely.*

*2.15 O chief among men, these surely do not afflict the man who is centered, Pleasure and pain are the same to him and he is ready for enlightenment.*

*2.16 The non-existent has no being; that which exists never ceases to exist; This truth about both is perceived by those who know the Truth.*

*2.17 Know It to be indestructible, by which this body is pervaded.*

*Nothing can destroy It, the Imperishable.*

*2.18 These bodies of material energy are perishable.*

*The energy itself is eternal, incomprehensible and indestructible.*

*Therefore, fight, O Bharata.*

Krishna says here that the sensory experiences are all temporary. Feelings of hot and cold, sweet and sour, wet and dry, experiences of pain and pleasure, as well as other experiences of like and dislike are all temporary. These experiences do not affect the centered person who is qualified to be enlightened.

Buddha refers to sensory experiences as *anicha* or impermanent and unreal. That they are impermanent is easy to understand. These experiences last only as long as the sensory stimuli are in place. Moreover, they are relative. What may be considered hot by one person may not be perceived as hot by another. Certainly,

the conclusions that heat is pleasurable or cold is pleasurable are both specific to individuals and circumstances. These are related to time, space and individuals.

There are many *sādhus* or ascetics, who stay in the higher reaches of the Himalayan mountains with very little clothing, in what everyone would consider bitter cold. There are those who carry out the *parikrama*, circumambulation, of Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar with meager clothing and footwear. Studies have been conducted on Tibetan Lamas in their high altitude snow-covered monasteries that show how the Lamas can bear extreme cold without any discomfort. Renowned scientists from reputed institutions such as the Harvard Medical School have conducted such studies.

When Nature is accepted totally, heat, cold, rain, dryness and all these changes do not affect the body-mind system. If we walk around without footwear, the earth that we walk upon becomes our friend. As long as we wear footwear with the intention of protecting ourselves from Nature, we are treating Nature as an outsider, as an enemy. We can therefore never be comfortable with Nature because of this attitude.

One who is firmly grounded in himself is grounded in Nature. To such a person, changes in Nature's parameters such as heat and cold, rain and shine, make no difference. They do not give him either pleasure or pain. Such a person treats them naturally, equally, with no difference.

Krishna says that such a person is qualified and ready for enlightenment. Such persons have brought their senses under control, and as a result have their mind too under control.

What Krishna says here, and what has been understood by the wise sages of the East for thousands of years, is only now being grasped by scientists and researchers.

The body-mind system that we are born with is transient, in the sense that it is perishable and ceases to exist at death. No human being, or for that matter, no living being on this planet Earth is exempt from this rule. Everything in material form ceases to exist in that form at some point in time, and in that sense, does not have permanence or a basis in Truth.

It is now accepted by medical science that the body-mind dies many deaths before its final exit. Cells within our body die in thousands everyday and get reborn. Over a period of a few years, every single cell in the body-mind system is

replaced and renewed. What you were two or three years ago is not what you are today. What you are today is not what you will be two or three years from now. Every single cell in your body-mind system, and therefore, every single bone, muscle, tissue, artery, vein, limb and body part is new, completely different from what it was two or three years ago.

The body-mind continually ceases to exist and gets recreated. It is not permanent. It is transient.

Separate from the body-mind system is our spirit that lives on eternally. The spirit remains the same throughout our life with no change, despite all the changes in the body-mind system. It continues to be, to exist, even after our death. The spirit does not die with the body. It lives on. It is permanent and true.

When one understands this difference between what is eternal - *nitya*, and what is transient - *mitya*, one becomes a seer and knower of Truth.

*Nitya* and *mitya* do not translate into real and unreal. In the same way *māyā* or what is loosely translated as illusion, is not unreal. *Māyā* and *mitya* are real and perceived by our senses but they refer to things that are not true, that are not lasting, that are not the truth, that are the untruth. They are factually real but truthfully unreal! That which is true will always be true; it cannot cease to exist. Truth here refers to the state of permanence, of being eternal.

I say a living master is not present as you feel, and a dead master is not absent as you think. The presence of a dead master, an enlightened dead master, is permanent and always real. A living master's form is not His only presence. He is present in His absence as well.

Our perceptions through our senses may be real but not necessarily true. What is an observed fact is not necessarily true. A dream is very real when it happens. You may get angry, frightened, excited, lustful and all of these when you dream. Your body responds to these emotions that you feel in a dream and your senses react to what you observe in the dream. Yet the moment you start witnessing the dream, you awaken. You cannot dream when you become aware. The dream is not true, though it seemed real.

The same happens when you are awake and daydreaming, which is most of the time! You are awake but you fantasize. The fantasies are real when you undergo the experience; they exist in your mind and are even experienced by your senses but they are not true. They are not permanent and you cannot do anything tangible with them.

Even when you think you are fully awake, what you perceive through your senses may not be what you interpret it to mean. Your mind always filters through its own lens of the ego. You judge whatever you perceive through your conditioned memories. In almost all cases, your judgment has already been made. All that you do is selectively put together pieces of what you perceive, to support your judgment.

That is the reason why the great masters have always urged their disciples to wake up. *Jāgrat* is the word used to awaken them. This is not the call to wake up from sleep but the call to wake up into awareness! It is the call to emerge from the non-existent reality of facts and observation into the truly existent Truth of self-experience.

Most of the time we exist in our past or future. We are constantly caught in the experiences of the past, reliving them under the excuse of learning from them, but in actuality, we are caught in guilt, regret or pleasure from remembering the past experiences and memories with no ability whatsoever to do anything about them. They are the ghosts hovering in our lives. The past is history. It is gone. The moving finger has written and moved on. There is no way that it will erase even a single thing that has been written. Our intelligence, creativity and bliss can be accessed only in this present moment, not in reviewing the past.

Our other mistake is to speculate about the future. The future is just as unreal as the past. If anything, it is more unreal, as it has not even happened. Yet, we build castles, we plan, we dream, and we fantasize about the future without the capacity to execute any of it. We are not even sure we will take our next breath. Even that is not under our control. How can we control events of the future when we cannot control our next breath?

The futility of our constant movement between past and future and back again is the greatest wonder of all. It is merely the stuff of our thoughts, supported by our belief that it is real. And it is the source of all of our suffering!

The only truth, the only true reality, is the truth of this very moment. As long as we focus on this present moment, we are truly aware and centered. The present moment never ceases to exist. In fact, that is all that does exist. The present moment alone is *sat*, truth, everything else is *asat*, untruth.

One who realizes this and acts accordingly, says Krishna, is enlightened.

We are all made of body, mind and spirit. The body is tangible; we can feel its boundaries. When a part of the body is sick, we can feel the discomfort. As long as we feel the body working smoothly, we say we are in good health.



Our mind is subtle. We do not feel the mind in the same way as we feel the body. We do not feel its boundaries. Yet, we feel the effects of the mind: thoughts, desires, emotions etc. Modern scientific studies have shown that what we term as mind is spread all over the body. Mind and its intelligence are inbuilt into our cellular structure.

Recent studies have shown that it is our belief systems, which in turn arise from our experiences, that define the development of our mind, and in turn influence the cellular structure. Earlier it was believed that genetic modifications to the cellular structure influenced the way we behaved. Now it is proven that it is our behavior that leads to our beliefs and thereafter determines our genetics.

Even subtler is the spirit. In fact, many people question this entity called spirit. What is it, they ask. What is this thing called spirit or soul? We cannot see it and we cannot touch it. Becoming aware of this subtle spirit or soul is just what Self-realization is all about.

In these verses, Krishna says first that the spirit pervades the body. His definition of body is the body-mind system. Secondly, He states that the body and mind are destroyed at death. Thirdly, He declares that the spirit does not die at death. Fourthly, He explains that the spirit is beyond our mental comprehension.

When death happens, bodily functions stop. The senses which are a function of the mind, stop working. The brain which processes thoughts stops working. The entire body-mind system is then left by itself and it degenerates. This part is clear to all of us who have seen death.

What is unclear or unknown to us is that there is something within us that does not perish at death. Krishna clarifies here that this is the Self, the *Ātman*, the energy that never dies.

The *Upaniṣads* talk about this spirit as dwelling deep in our hearts and being of such minute proportions that it is smaller than a fraction of a fraction of one's hair!

What is death? Is it the spirit leaving the body that causes death, or is it that death forces the spirit into leaving the body? This argument becomes irrelevant once one understands that the body-mind system is perishable, that it has a definite shelf life. It comes with an expiry date, whatever that date may be. However, beyond this expiry date, there is something that lives on and that is the spirit.

This spirit is energy; it is the energy of life. As I explained before, after death this energy moves from within the body that it occupied temporarily to the energy that is outside the body, the universal energy that surrounds the body.

Krishna urges Arjuna to fight, with the full understanding that what he thinks of as real is unreal, that what he thinks of as permanent is impermanent, and what he thinks he is about to destroy can, in truth, never be destroyed.

Arjuna is overcome with remorse, guilt, pity and insecurity at the very thought of killing his kinsmen. He believes that he is committing a mortal sin by killing them, since he thinks it will be the end of them. Krishna tells him to open his eyes. He tells Arjuna that what he is about to do will only destroy that which is going to perish anyway. Even if he wants to, Arjuna cannot destroy the imperishable spirit that lives on.

Arjuna's concern about the death of his kinsmen and elders arises out of his insecurity about his own death. He does not realize his true imperishable nature and therefore he is afraid of dying. By extension of this fear, he is afraid of others' deaths as well, especially at his own hands. Krishna tells him that there is no such thing as death. He tells him that death is unreal.

All our lives we see people around us dying. We all know that there is no one who is immortal. We all know that death is the only certainty in this otherwise uncertain world. Everyone, whether a beggar or a prince, must die.

When we wake up from a dream, we don't mourn our dream lives, as real as they felt at the time. Do we? No. In the same way, when we awaken into the highest state of consciousness, we have the same experience that this 'real' life was only a dream. There is nothing to mourn or fret over. The lineage of all enlightened masters the world over has again and again supported Krishna's declarations with their own direct experience. The body is just the shell that houses your spirit. Even when the body perishes, you do not. It is impossible because you are eternal. You are bliss.

Krishna is stating this reality straight out. He says firmly that there is no such thing as death. He says what dies or seems to perish is unreal; it had no permanent existence anyway.

What does have existence, what is truly real, exists now, has always existed and will exist forever!



## Inner And Outer Violence

*Q: Is it possible to be detached without being indifferent? How do we keep our hearts open along the spiritual path?*

Please be very clear: Only a person with an open heart can be detached.

If you are indifferent, you will only be dull, not detached. Only a person who can give himself completely can also detach himself completely. Understand that you never shower yourself on anybody because you are afraid that you may not be able to detach yourself from them. The power to share and detach is one and the same. If you cannot share yourself intensely, you cannot detach yourself. The person who struggles is half of everything, being able to neither attach nor detach. The one who can attach fully can also detach himself.

Many of you are so much in need of attention yourselves that it is difficult to express love and affection to others all the time. Your heart energy center, the *anāhata cakra*, is blocked by a desperate need for attention. You suck energy from others, since attention is energy. The main reason for this is your upbringing. Since childhood you are conditioned to please others and over time you cannot exist without approval from others.

Many of you may have experienced this. When someone is bitter and grieving and you give him or her a shoulder to cry on, you are left feeling drained of energy. You are not doing anything physical. You are not even experiencing anything emotional directly. You are only listening to someone cry. Yet, it affects you, it drains you. This is real. People suck energy from you. If you are not centered in your heart center and your heart center is not open, you will feel drained. This may then affect you physically.

By unblocking and energizing your *anāhata cakra*, the heart center, you become a permanent source of energy and become capable of showering attention and

affection on others without expecting anything in return and without feeling drained. We teach a simple meditation technique to activate and energize the *anāhata cakra* in our first level *cakra* energization course, the Life Bliss Program level 1. Not only does it make you capable of giving love without expectation, it is also a powerful self-healing meditation.

When you do not expect anything in return, you have no attachment and you become detached. Detachment does not refer to a state of non-caring, it is in fact just the opposite. The right word is non-attachment, not detachment. When you are not attached, you do not differentiate between strangers and family and friends. You shower attention and affection equally. There is no boundary to your circle of care; it is infinite.

Attachment binds you to the past and future. Non-attachment centers you in the present. When you genuinely care, and care unconditionally, you are no longer bothered about what a person did in the past and how he or she behaved with you. You are also no longer concerned about how they may act with you in the future. All that matters is that you care now.

That is why true love is always in the present. That is why it is blind; it is blind to the past and future. Real love only has eyes to see in the present moment. So long as the love has a fixed object, it cannot be called real love.

When you let go the object and let the love flow wherever, to whomever and however, love blossoms into compassion; it is love expressed in a state of total awareness.

*Q: Some masters talk of the Self as **pūrṇa** and some as **śūnya**. These have contradictory meanings. How can both be correct?*

Buddha refers to the ultimate stage as *śūnya*, nothingness. Adi Shankaracharya refers to the same stage as *pūrṇa*, fullness. Both masters refer to the same state. Shankara refers to Self-realization as liberation from all bondages of life and death. Buddha also refers to liberation from all bondages though he says there is no Self and all that there is, is nothingness.

Nothingness and fullness are opposite sides of the same state. They are not different from each other. They are just being viewed differently. When we refer to *śūnya*, we negate; when we refer to *pūrṇa* we include, that's all.

The *vedic* chant ‘*pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidam*’ says that from fullness arises fullness; when fullness comes out of fullness, fullness still remains. One can replace the word fullness in this chant with nothingness and the meaning will not change. Just as there is nothing beyond nothing, there is nothing beyond fullness.

Whatever you may add or subtract or multiply or divide from infinity, it will remain infinity. In mathematics if you add to zero you may get something, but if you add anything to nothingness, it will absorb the nothingness into it like a black hole and there will be nothing to show.

Shankara, who talked about *pūrṇa*, fullness, was the ultimate denier of everything. ‘*Neti, neti*, not this, not this,’ was his motto. At eight years of age, he responded to the questions of his Guru Govindapada, on the banks of the river Tungabhadra with six verses that form *Ātmaśataka*. Every verse in this response is denial. ‘I am not this, I am not that,’ Shankara says, ‘I am not the five elements. I am not the emotions. I am not the enjoyment.’ He then says, ‘I am Shiva. Nothingness leads to fullness.’

***Q: Krishna urges Arjuna to fight. Many Westerners say that Krishna preached and practiced violence. Is this correct?***

People whose mental tendencies are violent pretend to be shocked at what they perceive as physical violence. They do not understand that there is no difference between physical and mental violence; one cannot exist without the other.

In so-called civilized societies, the law controls and inhibits people from exercising the violence in their minds. You do not even find people smiling. If at all they do smile, the smile does not move beyond their lips. The smile is a dead smile. Suppression of mental violence does not make a person nonviolent; it does not make a person peaceful. It just makes the person a time bomb.

People call this privacy. Suppression of feelings is not privacy. It is a disaster waiting to happen. Not letting others into you is not privacy. It is an invitation to depression. You cannot become free by encasing yourself in seclusion.

It is like a monk running away from home thinking that he has renounced everything and that he will be free of all desires. Desires spring from the mind. If the inner maturity does not happen, then even if the monk sits far away from everything in a forest, fantasies will crowd his mind.

You need not run away from your family and become a monk. You can be with your family and renounce. You have to be awake and aware to renounce and be a true monk. You do not need to run away to the forests or the mountains to be awake. You can be awake wherever you are.

The master awakens you most often with a hard jolt! Ramana Maharshi says that the master is a *siṃha svapna*, a lion nightmare! The master is a nightmare that wakes you up from unreality into reality.

Krishna is removing the fantasies in Arjuna's mind. He is clearing the cobwebs of pretension that Arjuna and mankind have about what is good and what is evil. Truth is beyond good and evil. *Dharma*, the universal law of righteousness, is far different from society's law of morality and immorality.

We are all brought up with role models and behavior templates of what is right and what is wrong. This is based on societal conditioning. These guidelines and regulations are to ensure that society operates as smoothly as possible. When we do not have the awareness and intelligence to see beyond these rules and regulations and understand the reason behind them, we are constantly tempted and yet afraid to break them. We are like the toddler testing the parent's rules.

The Ten Commandments arose from the truth that Moses experienced. They were expressions of his experience. For his followers they were mere commandments that had to be enforced through fear and greed. What was a deep spiritual experience of awareness for one enlightened person, degenerated into guidelines for sin and merit, and gateways to hell and heaven.

Many Eastern scholars also have not understood Krishna. They either say Krishna is saying something metaphorical and they escape from His statements, or they criticize Him for advocating violence.

Krishna is not advocating violence. He is advocating awareness. He says that what we perceive as life and death is a dream. He says that what we perceive as good and evil and as right and wrong are relative, culture-based, impermanent and unreal. These dualities are born out of our conditioning and our ignorance. In reality there is no duality. There is no right or wrong, there is no good or evil.

It is this conditioning that makes people constantly ask why God is so cruel. This is why people question situations in the world like the death of a young child or the natural disasters that kill thousands. There are no logical answers except that this is the way of Nature. Nature's way is impermanence. Nature's way is unpredictable.

Krishna takes a sledgehammer to break our conditioning. He tells Arjuna, 'Fight!' knowing fully well that much of humanity will be shocked. People are shocked because this is what they have in their minds but are afraid to reveal. Constant suppression of violence in the mind breeds depression and leads to violence towards oneself. Some destroy themselves while some are in the process of destroying themselves and others.

It is good to accept the violence within. It is good to reflect upon and examine the violence within in order to understand wherefrom this violence springs. Once the understanding happens the violence will disappear.

A person who has the awareness to realize the impermanence of body-mind and the permanence of the spirit within, has already developed within himself the intelligence to know whether the fight and the killing are needed or not. That is why it is said that even if Buddha kills, it is no sin. It is an act born out of awareness that had to happen.

People who preach non-violence need to understand that *ahiṃsā*, the *vedic* concept of non-violence, goes well beyond physical non-violence. It is a comprehensive expression of an integrated person. It is non-violence of thoughts, words and from that, non-violence in action. Such non-violence can only happen through complete awareness. It can only happen when there is awareness that every being, animate and inanimate, is part of the same, interconnected cosmic energy. It can only happen when there is the awareness of boundarilessness.

In such a situation, with such awareness, when destruction happens, it is an integral part of creation; without such destruction there can be no further creation.

What Krishna says here cannot be understood just through simple logic, by reading or listening. It can only be understood through experience. Krishna is not saying that you logically determine what is right and what is wrong and then decide to fight against what is wrong. He does not give that choice to Arjuna because he does not trust Arjuna's logic. He does not trust any logic. He says that whatever you think of as good and bad, right and wrong, moral and evil, whatever you think of as opposing dualities are only figments of your own imagination.

There is no duality, there is no difference. The difference is in your awareness. When you shift your awareness beyond this duality, you are in a state of Oneness, Wholeness. In that state of Oneness there can be no violence.

*Q: Based on the beliefs of Christianity and Islam, rebirth or reincarnation is denied by the majority of the world's population today. Why do these religions deny this phenomenon if this is true?*

The socially correct answer to this would be not to get into this controversy and carry on with one's own belief systems!

Judaism, the religion that spawned both Christianity and Islam, believed in the concept of the spirit living on, moving from one body into another. The concept was called *gilgulim*. While modern Jews may discount this concept, orthodox Jews still believe in reincarnation.

Christian groups such as Gnostics and Islamic groups such as Sufis have repeatedly confirmed their belief in reincarnation. The Bible as it is read today was recompiled in the fourth century A.D. and in this process many statements that did not appeal to the Romans were discarded. This is a historical fact. Similarly, in the Koran there are verses that refer to a life before and after birth.

It is true that in these religions, reincarnation is not as central a concept as it is in the *vedic* tradition. There can be no doubt about this.

Disregarding what religions may say for or against reincarnation, one should look at this concept empirically and scientifically. Instead of dismissing the evidence of people with past life memories as hallucination, it is necessary to keep an open mind and investigate. Science today confirms that matter and energy are interconvertible and while matter can be destroyed, energy cannot be destroyed. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that the human system operates on energy. So what happens to this energy at death? It has to go someplace.

Even if one assumes that energy does not move from body to body, one has to concede that it goes into a central pool of energy. This is what we call *Brahman* in the *vedic* tradition. Since the newborn has to derive energy from somewhere, that energy has to come from a central pool, the same *Brahman*. Whichever way one argues, the energy of the spirit lives on and moves from one body to another, if not directly, then indirectly through a storehouse of energy.

From this agreement to actual reincarnation is a leap of faith. Actually it is a leap of experience. Every great master who has realized his Self has declared that he was one with Existence, one with *Brahman*. From this the concept of the individual Self, the *ātman*, developed, which is the same energy but contained in that individual.



Krishna says that the individual energy, the *ātman*, has the choice to move either into another body, like a person changing clothes, or to be liberated into *Brahman*. When the desires of the individual energy have been completely fulfilled, it merges into *Brahman*. When it has unfulfilled desires it enters into another body.

*Q: Swamiji, the concept of reincarnation gets even more complicated when we are told that we can be reborn as animals or even insects. That is pretty tough to understand, is it not?*

Yes, it does get more complicated.

We can so easily accept the concept of evolution which states that human beings evolved from single cell beings. However, even for those of us who can accept reincarnation it is very difficult to accept that human beings can also devolve into what we consider 'lower' forms. It is a threat to our identity. We think, 'How can I turn into a fly or a fish or whatever?'

What the spirit chooses in the future body depends upon the mental setup or tendencies of that person during the previous incarnation. It all depends on what kind of a life one led and with what unfulfilled desires one left the body. I say jokingly to people sometimes that if they are over-fond of sleeping they may be reborn as a buffalo and if they are gluttons they may take birth as pigs! There is an element of truth in this.

Do not imagine that human beings are so unique. They are unique to the extent that they are the only species that can think, and have the consciousness that can elevate them beyond this body-mind. Animals need to pass through the human body to be liberated. However, we have the same energy as animals, just in a different form. The highest energy center of an animal is our base energy center or *mūlādhāra cakra*. When the spirit of an animal evolves into a human, the higher *cakras* are developed. If a person lives throughout his life only in the *mūlādhāra cakra*, in lust and greed, there is every possibility that the person can be reborn as an animal. The spirit will move towards the lower energy centers at the time of death.

What is more difficult to grasp is how an animal moves up to become a human. Even though they lack the consciousness of a human to be liberated, animals can reach the highest levels of their own existence and can move up in the next birth. That is how evolution works.

People ask: A few centuries ago there was only a fraction of the current world population. Even if you add the animal population there would not have been six billion spirits. So, how did the population grow to six billion and how does it continue to grow? If new lives are based on rebirth where did all these new bodies come from?

Relax. All living beings are energy. Moreover this universe extends far beyond planet Earth. The entire space is energy. So there is enough energy to populate many planets, not only to overpopulate this Earth!



## You Are Immortal!

*2.19 Neither understands, he who takes the Self to be slayer nor he who thinks he is slain.*

*He who knows the truth understands that the Self does not slay, nor is It slain.*

*2.20 The Self is neither born nor does It ever die. After having been, It never ceases not to be.*

*It is Unborn, Eternal, Changeless and Ancient. It is not killed when the body is killed.*

*2.21 O Partha, how can man slay or cause others to be slain,*

*When he knows It to be indestructible, eternal, unborn, and unchangeable?*

*2.22 Just as man casts off his worn-out clothes and puts on new ones,*

*The Self casts off worn-out bodies and enters newer ones.*

*2.23 Weapons do not cleave the Self, fire does not burn It, water does not moisten It*

*And wind does not dry It.*

*2.24 The Self can neither be broken, nor burnt, nor dissolved, nor dried up.*

*It is eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable and ancient.*

*2.25 The Self is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable and unchangeable.*

*Knowing this to be such, you should not grieve.*

Krishna directly addresses some of Arjuna's earlier doubts in these verses. Arjuna has claimed that destroying his relatives and his mentors will bring him untold grief, not only in this world but in future births as well. He claims that his future generations will suffer as a result of such evil deeds.

Krishna explains to Arjuna that all his fears are misplaced. There is no death in reality. What is seen as death is the destruction of the impermanent body. No one therefore can kill another person or be killed by another person. Both are illusions.

The spirit that occupies the body lives on forever. It occupies the body temporarily, but by itself the Self is eternal, indestructible, and has no births and deaths. It is the body, the sheath that covers it, that dies and is reborn. The spirit or the Self lives on forever.

What Krishna says here is radically different from what any other scripture has said. Krishna denies the concept of death here. He says there is no such thing as death. He is not saying: be good, and you will be taken care of when you die and if you are bad, you will suffer. He says there is no death, that's all.

Just imagine that as an infant, you are cast away on an island with no other living being. As you grow older, will you have any idea of what it is to die? When indeed your body dies what will happen? Nothing. You will not know anything, that's all. It is as Socrates, the Greek philosopher said as he died, 'How does it matter if I am going into nothingness and I never come back?' Birth, rebirth and all this will also not make a difference.

Here Krishna is talking to someone who has witnessed death. So, He has to explain to him that death does not exist; that it is a mere passage from one shell into another; it is a transfer from one body into another.

It is the individual's attachment to the body that creates the illusion that the individual also perishes with the body.

Attachment to the body is the most intense of all attachments. We also get attached to material possessions as well as our relationships. The potential loss of these leads to fears similar to that of losing one's body.

One who understands that all these attachments are temporary and are the cause of all our suffering, understands the truth.

Understanding this truth removes all fears.

Cultures that do not accept the concept of the continuance of the spirit inculcate this fear of loss of identity deeply in the individual psyche. People are bred on the

belief that one's life ends at death. It is a permanent end. This belief leads to desperate behavior, as if there is no further time for the individual to seek happiness. Hell and heaven have been created based on this concept of having a single life and the permanence of death. Concepts of hell and heaven are used by all cultures to control people through fear and greed.

Once a person understands that death, like birth, is merely a passage, and sees the continuity of being, the fear of losing one's identity disappears. One is relaxed. One is no longer terrorized and controlled by fears of sin and hell.

This is why religions that accept the continuance of life after death, as Hinduism and Buddhism do, breed a culture of tolerance amongst their followers. There is no rush to live and extract the maximum juice out of one's life in a single birth. These religions state that we all come from a common energy source and we go back to this source, and the cycle continues. Those who understand this spiritual truth preach acceptance, inclusion and compassion, and they have no desire to convert others to their beliefs.

It is easy to misinterpret these verses and say that if there is no one really killing or being killed, then what stops us from mindless killing? That is not what Krishna intends.

One who truly understands that death is not the end of the path, but only a milestone in the journey, is not perturbed by death when it happens naturally or when it is caused for a purpose.

These truths are spoken to Arjuna who already understands the basic truths of *yama* (the first step of the philosophy formulated by Patanjali, a great ancient master of yoga). These are the principles of *satya* (truth), *ahimsā* (non-violence), *aparigraha* (living simply), *āsteya* (non covetousness) and *brahmacarya* (living without fantasies). Arjuna fully understands the implications of killing, and that, as a *kṣatriya*, it is his *dharmic* code of conduct that requires him to slay his enemies.

Here Krishna reveals to him a more subtle level of truth that he hasn't yet grasped. Arjuna shies away from killing, not because of his conviction of *ahimsā*, non-violence, but because he identifies with the people he has to destroy. His hesitation is from ignorance, attachment and fantasy, not from the wisdom of non-violent compassion.

Krishna's message to Arjuna is as it would be to someone who has to uphold *dharma* at all costs, and in today's context that would apply to a soldier or a policeman. However, it would not be a blind acceptance of orders that would

compel such people to take lives. It would not be an action driven by fear and greed. It would not be killing for gain and it would not be killing out of fear that one would be killed. It would be an ultimate action, born out of the knowledge that such destruction is needed for universal good and that such destruction would lead to creation.

Such is the destructive aspect of Nature. Nature destroys to recreate. Shiva is the Rejuvenator not the destroyer as we normally refer to him. This is what Krishna preaches to Arjuna within this context.

You may ask, 'If nothing is destroyed and nothing can be destroyed, is there no sin in killing at all? All the people whom we call villains like Hitler, Bin Laden and others, do they commit no sin by killing? They are only killing bodies that will perish anyway. So Krishna is indifferent to mass violence?

No, He is not. For one thing, Krishna speaks as an enlightened master from an existentialist perspective and says that, even when the body perishes, the spirit lives on, and therefore, there is no death.

Violence and killing are not merely physical acts. They are psychological compulsions acted out. A person with Hitler's mindset but without Hitler's power, would have behaved similarly but on a smaller scale. The generals who ordered the bombing of Hiroshima were far more violent than the pilot who actually pressed the button that dropped the bomb. The ruler of a country who orders warfare against others is the violent one, even if he hides behind his throne.

Violence of the mind carries on as the *vāsana* or desires; the essence of the spirit, that incarnates from birth to birth. That is the horror that does not end with death. The spirit is violated, degraded, and degenerated by this attitude of violence.

A violent man is always a coward. He does not have the courage to face the truth. He does not have the sensitivity to treat others as he expects to be treated.

He isolates himself in a cocoon of lies, using the excuse of defending himself, and commits violence against others.

In modern times, violence has increased because it is so much easier to kill than to work through problems and find solutions.

Most often we do not even have to face the person we want to kill. We can fire a pistol or a rifle; we can throw bombs; and if one is a ruler with power, he or she can press a button or convince a nation that unleashing havoc is the best option

available. We do not have to face the consequences of what we are doing and can pretend we know nothing about it. We can even pretend that we are committing these acts in the name of God and righteousness.

When we become aware, when we become conscious that the person next to us is actually an expression of the energy of God, how can we possibly respond with violence? It has nothing to do with whether someone is family, part of our culture, part of our religion or part of our nation. It does not matter if the other person shares our history, habits or beliefs. The other person may oppose all that we believe in. Yet he is as much a part of this universe as we are.

That is why Krishna says, 'How can that man slay or cause others to be slain, who knows Him to be indestructible, eternal, unborn, unchangeable?'

How can we? How can violence develop in us when we recognize ourselves to be God, which automatically enables us to be aware that every other living being, animate and inanimate too is God's image?

If this message of Krishna is truly understood, there can be no violence in this world, no killing at all. You will not even kill an insect. You will not kill even in self-defense because once you are in awareness, your awareness is transmitted to the other being and that being will not even attack you.

Once in Omkareshwar, a forest region, I saw this huge bear when I got up from meditation. It was very close to me. I felt no fear. The bear looked at me and walked away. I have come across deadly cobras many times. They just look and go away. When I feel no fear, and therefore no enmity with them, they understand and accept. All this talk about killing others in self-defense is a lie.

All the nations in this world claim they have standing armies because they need to defend themselves. The right to defend is enshrined in all self-respecting constitutions. So, if everybody is only defending, who then is offending? Does anyone think about that?

Even a domesticated dog reacts in anger only when it detects our fear. Our violence arises out of our own fear. Even a dog knows that, because it is intelligent, naturally intelligent, unlike us humans. Only humans have the choice to deny nature and be idiotic.

Understand what Krishna says and you will never have fear, either for yourself or for others. You are imperishable; everyone around you is imperishable. Shed your fear and violence. Let love for others fill your being.

Krishna continues:

Just as man casts off his worn-out clothes and puts on new ones, the Self casts off worn-out bodies and enters newer ones. Weapons do not cleave the Self, fire does not burn It, water does not moisten It, and wind does not dry It. The Self can neither be broken, nor burnt, nor dissolved, nor dried up. It is eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable and ancient.

These verses are amongst the most quoted verses of Bhagavad Gita. Here, in very few words, Krishna expounds upon the entire truth of life and death, mind, body and spirit. He clarifies why we should accept death gladly, as a matter of fact and course, instead of grieving over it.

He says this so simply that even an innocent child can understand this truth.

One does not have to be learned in the scriptures. In fact, it is a great liability to read the Gita when one is well versed in scriptures. We then miss the truth, the simplicity, the innocence of what Krishna says.

What makes Gita stand apart from all other scriptures, and yet be considered one of the most sacred scriptures alongside the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, is this simple authority and clarity with which this master of the universe, this complete incarnation, speaks.

So simply He says: 'Just as you cast off your shirt when it is dirty and put on a new one, so does the spirit cast off this body and enter into a new one.'

Do we grieve over a dirty shirt that we have cast away when we know we will have a new one? Do we say, 'Oh, I am so attached to this shirt. I cannot let it go. Let me keep wearing it. I shall be heartbroken if I have to take off this shirt?'

When we see a new shirt, a new garment, the feeling is automatic. We let go the old and take on the new. Why then this hesitation, this fear, when the spirit says, 'Let me get out of this body; it is so old and decrepit; it is diseased and foul. Let me go find a newer, better body.'

If only we understand that a body needs to be changed when it grows old, in just the same way as the shirt does when it is dirty, there would be no grief, no attachment.

This simple truth is so profound that it takes the greatest master of all to say it.

'Don't worry', He says, 'what you will find is a newer, better and more attractive model! Let go of your fears; let go of your attachment. Look forward to



what is to follow with joy and a sense of anticipation and celebration. Celebrate death. Do not mourn over it.'

Krishna goes on to explain further what that unchanging continuity is, even as the spirit moves from one body to another. What is the nature of that spirit? How is it that it is everlasting?

Krishna says, 'Please understand, Arjuna, the Soul is not destroyed as you think. It cannot be destroyed at all. No weapon can destroy It. No *astra*, no *brahmāstra*, no nuclear weapon can destroy the energy within the body. Fire cannot burn It, water cannot wet It, and air cannot dry It. It is not made of the elements and cannot be destroyed by the elements. Neither can the absence of the elements destroy It. It is beyond the five elements. It is the energy behind the elements. It is the energy that creates the elements. How can It then die?'

'It cannot be disintegrated in any manner, by breaking, dissolving, burning or drying, as one could do to any other substance made of the five elements of nature. It is eternal. It transcends all the elemental powers. It pervades the universe. It has been there always. It never had to be created. Therefore, It never can be destroyed.'

An understanding of the truth that Krishna unveils here is the key to immortality. It is the key to liberation from the bondage of life and death. It is the doorway to enlightenment.

'Do not fear death,' Krishna says, 'neither yours nor that of others. It is just a passage. It is the disappearance of this material body. However, you are beyond this material body. Even if the body perishes, you live on, so you do not have to worry or fear.'

What survives death is the sacred spirit in you that can never be destroyed. This spirit is not matter; it is pure energy. How can you destroy energy? Science states that energy can only appear in another form; it cannot be destroyed. As I have said, the energy of the spirit reappears in another form as matter, or it stays as energy.

It is the energy behind the elements; it is that source which creates the elements. It is the energy that has always been and will be, never created, never destroyed. It is unchanging, neutral, eternal and all pervading. The experience of every enlightened being verifies the truth that Krishna is uttering.

‘When you are that spirit, that energy,’ asks Krishna, ‘what is there to grieve about? When you are the Divine yourself, what can you fear? What can you want? What more can you ask for?’

The same answer, the same explanation holds good for every one of us. We are divine. We are the universe. We cannot be destroyed. We live on despite what we see to be the destruction of our body and identity. Once we understand this truth, nothing can disturb us. We can be in bliss.

In the Mundakopanishad there is a story of two birds.

Two birds were sitting on a large fruit-bearing tree that had many branches. It had many fruits on each of its branches. One of the birds was a golden-hued bird with a lovely plumage. It had a serene calmness about it and was perched silently upon one of the upper branches, which had fewer fruits. It spent most of its time unmoving, showing no interest in the fruits around it. The second bird was smaller and livelier. This bird was always restless and kept jumping from one branch to another searching for fruits to eat.

The second bird felt very happy when it tasted sweet fruits and chirped happily. When it came across a bitter or sour fruit which was often, it made irritated noises and looked unhappy. The more the sour and bitter fruits that it tasted, the more sorrowful this bird became. It said to itself that there is no joy in these fruits and there is no joy at all in living like this.

It then looked up and saw the blissful golden bird perched above it, sitting in silence, calm and relaxed. The golden bird seemed to light up the entire tree. The smaller bird flew up to look at the golden bird more closely. On the way up it saw some juicy fruits and it stopped to peck at them. The fruits were tasty and it settled down to eat more. Then some fruits turned bitter and some sour, and it grew disappointed. It looked up and saw the golden bird again, calm, happy, and relaxed. It moved up again.

It flitted up and down, right and left. Each time it saw the golden bird it would fly up closer. It would then stop to taste a fruit that first tasted sweet, only to move on to bitter and sour fruits as it stayed on to eat more.

Finally, it reached the treetop where the golden bird was perched. It looked at it closely and was startled to find that the golden bird was none other than its own self! It went closer and closer, becoming happier and more relaxed. The smaller bird felt a deep connection with the golden-hued bird. It was love, not

falling in love, but rising in love. Soon it lost its own identity and merged with the golden bird.

When we realize that we are one with the golden bird, our inner divinity, there is no longer any fear of death. There is no longer any question about who we are. We know.

‘Weapons cannot cleave It, fire cannot burn It.’ If only the so-called leaders of this world understood what Krishna is saying! Then, there would be no need for United Nations, Peace Days, Friendship Days and so on. Everyday would be a Peace Day.

What are we trying to do by killing people, by eliminating the physical evidence of their existence? We are trying to eliminate the evidence of people who do not believe us, who dare to question us, and who dare to laugh at us. We would only like to be surrounded by people who fear us, and out of that fear, pretend to respect us, like us, love us. Great leaders killed people not because they were offended by them but because they were afraid of them. The great dictators killed to protect themselves, out of fear. Externally they projected an image of great courage, but inside they were cowards. These dictators would have other people taste their food first in case it was poisoned. They would have their ‘twins’ following them to mislead people. They all live their lives in utter fear.

At the heart of all torture and killing is fear and greed. When we sincerely contemplate these teachings, and this verse of the Gita in particular, such concerns dissolve and we live peacefully with ourselves and others.

If you are courageous, you will face anyone and state your case. In the event that you cannot convince the other person, you will accept the situation and walk away. In life, in this world, there is enough room for different opinions. It is when we get opinionated, fixed in obsessive beliefs and become intolerant of other beliefs, that we become afraid. We become afraid that we too may lose our belief, that we may lose our identity. That insecurity and fear of loss of identity is greater than the fear of death. It is in fact nothing but the fear of death, since we see death as the ultimate elimination of our identity. So we respond violently. To avoid being killed, we kill.

Once we understand what Krishna says, that death is like changing a worn-out garment, our fears will disappear. If we are truly wise, this false identity itself will disappear. Why do we need that garment at all? We will feel freer, fully liberated when we do not have that garment. Then there is no need even to worry about that change.

In fact, the deeper level understanding of this truth is that there is really no need to change the garment. It is only when we have the garment that we have to worry about whether the garment is dirty or torn and how to replace it. If there is no garment at all, there are no more concerns. Going beyond the garment is going beyond the body-mind. It is going beyond the cycle of life and death, the cycle of *samsāra*. It is going to the ultimate liberation in this life itself. It is the ultimate relaxation.

Shankara says hauntingly in Bhaja Govindam: Again and again one is born and one dies; one keeps going back into the mother's womb. Oh Lord, the rower of the boat that would help me cross this ocean of life and death, please help me across.



## Be Aware Of The Depression Of Success!

*Q: Swamiji, You talked earlier about the depression of success, which affects many people around the world. What if a young person has experienced this several times? Is there hope?*

Please be very clear: Whatever you may have experienced is not depression based on success but depression based on failure. If you are still struggling to reach the material goals that you have set for yourself and you have failed repeatedly, then you have yet to experience the depression of success.

The depression of success happens only to mature people. It is a gift from the Divine and a luxury in life. I tell you, the depression of success is the ultimate luxury; all cannot afford it. To experience this depression you need two things – all your material needs must be fulfilled, and you need to have intelligence. Only when you have both, the external comforts and the intelligence to look beyond, will you experience the depression of success.

If you are depressed because of failure, it cannot be called depression. It is just failure.

There are people who come to me and say that when they came to the USA as immigrants, they had hardly any money, but they are millionaires today. They have everything that they always wanted, but now have forgotten why they wanted all this in the first place! Of course, the easiest answer to why you want wealth is to say that you want to be happy. But when you have amassed wealth far beyond your expectations, and still happiness seems far away, it should make you wonder why you worked so hard.

People keep acquiring, but possessions no longer bring enjoyment to them. There is no time for enjoyment since acquisition takes up all their time and effort. Then

they experiment and keep changing all that they have, in the hope that the next possession may bring about happiness.

This happens a lot with modern day men and women. They change cars every year, homes every three years and their spouses every fifth year! And after all that, although the latest models should bring in greatest joy, unfortunately they don't feel satisfied.

In the *vedic* tradition there is no concept of divorce. There is no word in Sanskrit for divorce. It is not that our ancient *vedic* sages lived an unreal life and expected that there will be no marital problems. Their tradition was not based on changing the other person but changing one's own personality!

You can keep changing the objects and persons; there will be no end to it and no satisfaction either. With each change, your mind will demand more change. In French, I am told there is a saying: change leads to more change. Unless your mind changes you cannot reach satisfaction and fulfillment. It is this change of mind, this transformation, that the *vedic* tradition suggests and trains you for.

Depression of failure is easier to solve. Just work hard and smart. Focus on the present moment without worrying about the end result. This is what Krishna advises and it works. Non-attachment to possessions works just as well as non-attachment to people and relationships. It takes the stress out of your action. Instead of chasing deadlines and goals, you focus more on what needs to be done now, and make sure it gets done. This will solve your failure issues.

Giving up attachment to what you acquire and enjoying what you have in the present moment will solve your problem of depression of success.

***Q: In many countries the death penalty has been banned as being inhumane. In others it is maintained as being essential to law and order. Which approach is correct?***

In ancient Sumerian civilization the code of Hammurabhi declared: An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

Some cultures still follow this logic. If everyone were to demand the next person's eye, soon the entire world would be one eyed at best!

Will it solve any problems? No.

Has the death penalty reduced homicidal crime rates anywhere? Statistics show otherwise. In fact, the most peaceful cultures are the tribal cultures in which all problems are resolved through mutual discussion and agreement. Courts of law, prisons and such other civilized societal solutions have not helped lower crime rates.

It has been established that meditation reduces crime rates. The Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Institute has done remarkable work in this field. They say that even if the square root of 1% of the population of an area meditates together, then in that location, mental attitudes change and crime rates are reduced. Experiments have been conducted successfully in Washington D.C. using this approach.

If a group of just about 10,000 people were to meditate together, they can bring about a beneficial change in the attitudes of people and in the environment. But this is too easy for most people. Our conditioning is such that we cannot believe such things can work. The human ego is violent by nature. We demand an eye for an eye, a body for a body. It is this inner violence that fosters crime. Rules and regulation, courts and prison cells can do nothing to change this. Violence cannot cure violence.

Transformation needs to happen within. No one can transform another person, especially by force. However, you can transform people by example. That is what Buddha meant when he urged his followers to light more lamps with the lamps that he had lit within them.

We have been doing meditation courses in prisons. Other organizations have also done this. We find that we are able to make a difference. Through the process of meditation, inner violence and negativities can be dissolved and genuine transformation can happen.

Instead of finding lasting solutions to the issue of why inner violence builds up and how it can be diffused, there is a lot of debate that goes on about how to execute death by law painlessly! When we condemn people to death by law we are still killing people. We are not in the enlightened state of Krishna to proclaim that the spirit lives on forever and therefore governments are free to kill in the name of justice!

*Q: Swamiji, please comment on desires. Most masters recommend sealing of desires. How can this be done?*

I can comment on desires but do not want to comment on what most masters recommend! I tell you honestly that sealing of desires cannot be done. Suppression will only lead to perversion and other difficulties. *Transformation* is the only possibility; suppression cannot be practised. Whether it is related to the senses, enjoyment, name and fame or anything, the more you suppress, the more you poison your system. All you can do is transform the desires. If you want this to happen, enter into meditation and let your energies be transformed. Except transformation, there is no other way to escape from desires. Just divert the energy and let it become pure. When you transform, you will have pure desire without it being directed towards any object.

Desire without object is energy. When your energy is attached to an object, it becomes desire and when the desire is detached from the object it becomes energy. That is why in *vedic* systems we call desire *icchā shakti* or desire energy. As long as there is no object, it leads you to bliss. When there is an object, it leads you to bondage. You can only transform or purify it through meditation. Never suppress it. Suppression only leads to more problems. Work for transformation, not for suppression.

***Q: If the Self cannot be destroyed or harmed, it cannot be hurt. Why then do we feel pain and why does the body get hurt?***

This was the question that in a way sparked off my spiritual quest!

When I was about ten, I went to listen to Annamalai Swamigal, an enlightened saint in my native place of Tiruvannamalai. He was giving a discourse on the great *Vedantic* truths and said that we are immortal and do not feel pain. That surprised me! I thought, 'I have pain. If I am yelled at or if someone beats me, I feel pain. Then how can this statement be true?' I already had a passion for the truth and the willingness to experiment to realise it. So I went home and cut myself on my thigh to check it out! It pained like crazy. I was scolded and taken to the doctor to be sewn up. It took something like thirteen stitches. The scar is still there! I went back to Annamalai Swamigal and asked why he told me there is no pain. He laughed and lovingly said, 'Don't worry my son. Your courage to test these truths will be enough to lead you to experience them.' He then initiated me into a simple but powerful meditation technique that eventually led me to my first glimpse of the truth.



The body is the material aspect of the spirit; the body is matter and the spirit or Self is energy. The body is the shell of the energy or light of being. Body and matter perish, while the Self, the energy lives on. This body or body-mind is the collection of all our thoughts, desires, emotions and experiences. It is usually driven by our senses.

As long as we feel the difference between matter and energy, body, mind and spirit, we shall continue to feel the pain. When the understanding dawns that matter and energy are one and the same, that the Self is what drives the body-mind, then all the differentiation stops. You may still feel some pain in your body that is matter, but there will be no suffering.

This is why, when great masters like Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi and Ramakrishna Paramahansa had cancer, they were still blissful; they had no suffering at all. Bhagavan used to say, 'Whose body is this?'

When the boundarilessness happens, as in enlightenment, when there is bodily pain, the awareness also happens that the body is mere matter; it is anyway perishable; there is something beyond that matter. Then there is no pain.

The next time you have pain, intensely focus on the pain. People normally advise you to divert yourself from the pain. That does not work; it returns the moment the diversion stops. Instead, focus on where the pain is.

Initially you will feel pain all over. When you focus, it will get limited to a certain spot. Finally it will reduce to a tiny spot. If you focus further, the pain will go away. The very attention you bestow on the body will provide the energy to eliminate the pain.

This is an excellent meditation. The focus that you give the pain will make you realize that you are more than the mere body. You will touch your energy base and realize that you are more than the body-mind.

You then enter the space that Krishna describes; you enter *nityānanda*, eternal bliss.

*Q: If the body one takes is determined by what one does in the previous life, would it mean that evil persons like Hitler will continue to be reborn as evil persons? Is there no redemption for such people under this scheme of things?*

One thing is certain; spirits of exceptionally 'good' people and exceptionally 'evil' people will have a more difficult time finding a suitable body than other more average spirits.

This does not mean that they have to continue with the same cycle. The cycle need not be always a virtuous or vicious cycle; it need not be one that constantly descends or ascends. Reversals are possible.

In Hindu mythology we have stories of many divine beings who are born as demons because of their mindsets, who after working off their *vāsana* become divine again. The great sage Valmiki who wrote the epic Ramayana was a robber. He was a ruthless killer who was transformed by the name '*Narayana*,' (a name of Lord Vishnu) and while meditating upon that name was liberated. In Buddhist tradition there is the story of Angulimal, a dacoit who had vowed to kill a thousand people. He met Buddha and became a monk and a disciple.

Please understand that the creation of this mindset is not something that is destined. It is a choice we all have and it is a choice that all of us exercise knowingly or unknowingly. The problem is that most of us exercise it unknowingly. We let our mind drive us and form this mindset. We are like drivers who are driven by the car. But, we have a choice. We can take over and become the master of our minds. It may seem difficult initially but this is what the mind wants. Once you exercise control it becomes your valuable servant. You realize the unlimited potential of what your body-mind can do.

That is why in the true spiritual sense there is nothing that is inherently good or evil. It is all real only within a certain time and space. No one remains evil all the time and no one stays good all the time. We can rewrite our fate. Our destiny is in our hands.



## Death Is But A Passage

*2.26 O mighty-armed, even if you should think of the soul as being constantly born and constantly dying,*

*Even then, you should not lament.*

*2.27 Indeed, death is certain for the born and birth is certain for the dead. Therefore, you should not grieve over the inevitable.*

*2.28 O Bharata, Beings are unmanifest in their beginning, unmanifest again in their end, and seemingly manifest in their middle state.*

*What are we grieving about?*

*2.29 One sees It as a wonder, another speaks of It as a wonder, another hears of It as a wonder.*

*Yet, having heard, none understands It at all!*

*2.30 O Bharata, This that dwells in the body of everyone can never be destroyed;*

*Do not grieve for any creature.*

When you understand what Krishna is saying in these verses you get over any fear of death. In fact you will celebrate death.

Sometime ago when I was delivering a discourse in India, news arrived that my father had died. I continued with the discourse. Later that night, many of our disciples traveled with me to Tiruvannamalai where the body lay. If you see the videos of this event, you will find that my mother never once cried. She was a very traditional person, brought up in a rural environment that sets great importance on how one should behave socially. When one's husband dies one is naturally

heartbroken; especially as in the case of my mother and father, who were very close to each other. His departure would have been a great loss to her. She understood the meaning of these verses of Krishna without my ever having to explain them to her.

When I told her my father, her husband, is now in the energy form that is eternal, she trusted my words implicitly and joined me in celebrating his release. Many of our followers have seen the video recording of this event. It was made specifically to explain what Krishna is saying here. They could see it in action and get over any fear that they may have still had about death.

Even more interestingly, another incident reinforced this truth. Soon after my father's death, the father of a disciple died and the family requested that the body be cremated at our Bidadi ashram and that I do the last rites. People who met the widow after the cremation were astounded to see the peace and calm in her, unlike what one would see in a traditional Hindu widow. When people asked her how she felt, she simply replied that she fully believed that her husband's energy survived the destruction of the body and she was happy that he had found peace.

We are not talking about philosophers and saints here. We are talking about very ordinary people whose lifestyle was all about fear of death and grief at death. They understood very easily what Krishna was saying. They understood that the spirit lives on after the body perishes and death is indeed an event to celebrate and not to grieve. It is only the scholars who have a mere intellectual understanding of what Gita says with no trust in Krishna, and still suffer from the fear of death. They may talk philosophically about how to detach from death as long as it does not affect them. The moment they face the death of a beloved or worse still, their own, their logical defenses crumble.

Krishna's words are not about logic; they are about trust in the master.

The celebrated Greek philosopher, Socrates, was sentenced to death because the Greek society could not accept his views and his constant questioning attitude. He was asked to take back his sayings, failing which he was sentenced to die by drinking poison. Since he refused to reject his own philosophy, Socrates was sentenced to death.

As he calmly awaited his death, his disciples asked him, 'Master, are you not afraid of dying?' Socrates said, 'There are two possibilities. One, that there is indeed life after death. In that case I shall continue to exist in the same form. The

other is that there is no life after death. In that case I shall not be aware of anything that would happen after death. In either case, what is there to worry about?’

Death is inevitable. Whether the spirit lives on after the body perishes and locates itself in another body may be a debatable point to some. Krishna says that this is not a reason to lament death. In either case, death can be a passage that one can look forward to as Socrates did.

Whether the spirit goes to a region called hell or another region called heaven is as debatable a point as whether there is an undying spirit at all, or whether that spirit reincarnates. You may believe whatever you like to believe. Occidental religions don’t believe in the cycle of life and death. They seem to believe that death is once and for all. Even then what is there to worry about?

We all know death is inevitable.

A deeply disturbed woman approached Buddha one morning. She brought the body of her dead son to Buddha and said, ‘Master, they tell me that you are the only one in this world with the power to revive the dead. Please give life back to my son.’

Buddha knew that no words of His could console the mother. He merely said, ‘Mother, please bring me a handful of mustard seeds from any household that has not experienced death so far and I shall revive your son.’

The woman went door-to-door seeking a handful of mustard seeds. Every household she visited was only too glad to give her what she asked for. However, they all said that they too had suffered such a loss in their household. She went to neighboring villages and got the same reply.

She came back to Buddha and said, ‘Master, I now understand that death is inevitable and that there can be no life without death. Thank you for teaching me this invaluable truth. I would like to sit at your feet for the rest of my life. Please accept me as your disciple.’

Bringing the dead back to life is not a miracle. It can be done under certain circumstances, but to transform individuals and to instill truth in them is indeed the miracle that only a true master can perform.

Many of us do believe that life is a wonder; truly so. Life is wondrous! We do not understand how life is created. We may have a biological explanation as to how a new life is created.

Even today there is no absolute proof as to how the universe was created. All one has are theories such as Big Bang etc. What was there before the Big Bang? No one knows.

Buddha rightly observed, 'The universe creates itself. It always was and always will be.' No one knows as well, how the first life form originated. Again, there are only theories. The explanation for 'abiogenesis', creation of life from non-living matter, has no scientific proof as yet. The first life form just seems to have happened. One fine morning or evening or night, the first amino acid, the first life block, seems to have sprung up from nowhere.

All that we know is that life exists. All we can observe and wonder about is the life form that is in front of us, that is manifest. What was there before and what happened to it thereafter are shrouded in questions and mystery. We can believe in what we believe but we do not know as we have not observed it personally.

From time immemorial this has been the human quest. What happens after life, or more correctly, after death? Conversely, what were we before we were born?

I mentioned the famous Zen *koan*, 'What was your face like before your father and mother were born?' What was it? If only you knew, you would have solved the mystery of life and death, wouldn't you?

The very effort of visualizing the possibility of an existence before this life opens doors. That is what this *koan* tries to do. There is no need to see your face. The fact that you understand and realize that you existed before, exist now and will exist again makes a difference to how you live your life from now on. You will no longer fear death because you have been there before!

It is unfortunate that the present day version of the Bible discounts the statement of Jesus when He says, 'I was there before Abraham.' It is the same as Krishna saying in Gita that He taught Surya, the Sun god. Jesus implies that the spirit energy lives on and the death of the body is not final.

The cycle of life and death is a mystery and a wonder. As yet there is no 'scientific' proof as the logical mind would demand, though there is plenty of empirical evidence. Quantum Physics and Molecular Biology are making rapid advances in this area and it is possible that there would be some 'proof' soon.

Those who are confident enough to accept the truth of the eternal nature of the spirit are the fortunate, the blessed. Those who fight and grieve are the wretched, the miserable. You cannot fight life or death. They are both beyond you, out of

your control. You can marvel at them and be happy and joyous. Or you can keep questioning them and be miserable. This is the choice and free will you have.

The illustrious King Yayati lived for hundreds of years. Bhagavatam, the Hindu epic, says that when Yama, the god of death, came to Yayati at his appointed time of death, Yayati begged to be allowed to live on. He said he had not lived life enough and he needed more time. Yama relented and said that if one of his sons would give Yayati the rest of his life, then he could live that long. Using the life span of his son, Yayati lived many more years. Finally the realization dawned on him that no matter how long he lived, his desires would never cease and that fulfillment would never happen through material enjoyment. Yayati gave himself up to Yama once he realized this truth.

It is not death that frightens us. It is leaving our desires and unlived life that frightens us.

The problem is that we do not know how to live a fulfilled life, how to genuinely enjoy ourselves so that our desires are fulfilled. All our desires are partially fulfilled because, before they are fulfilled, we move on to other desires. We do not give our attention or awareness fully to what we are doing and experiencing. The simple fact is that we do not know how to be joyful.

To be truly joyful, to be eternally blissful, is to understand the truth that you are indestructible, that your spirit lives on.

Death is not an end; it is a passage of sorts. The truth is that the spirit is not satisfied with mere material pleasures. However much you please your senses, you cannot achieve satisfaction. The more you enjoy through your senses, the more the need for enjoyment. It never stops. Discontentment with material pleasures alone is hardwired into the human psyche.

People are really confused about the concept of spirituality. Spirituality is not something intangible or something mysterious.

Spirituality is the total understanding and enjoyment of life - materially, physically, emotionally, relationally and in all senses without discontent and with responsibility. This enjoyment and responsibility arise out of awareness. This awareness arises out of our ability to focus on the present moment. That is when our mind stops flitting from the past to the future, from regrets to speculation.

The present moment is the only moment when we are truly alive. That is the only moment we are awake. The rest of the time we are in deep sleep, even if our eyes are open; we are in virtual death. Yet, we, the walking dead are afraid to die.

Whether one believes in God or not, and accepts the inner divinity within oneself or not, is irrelevant to how one understands life after death.

If, instead of believing in God, we choose to believe in science, we still need to accept that there are no answers to what we were before we were born and what we will be once we are dead. It is still unmanifest at both ends; it is still a mystery before and after, with no answers. This understanding can only come with the understanding that we live on in spirit.

A Zen master was asked, 'Now that you are enlightened, what is the difference in your perception of things around you?'

The master said, 'Before enlightenment, I saw a mountain as a mountain and a river as a river. During the process towards enlightenment the mountain was not a mountain and the river was not a river. Now again, the mountain is a mountain and the river is a river.'

The master here means that before he set out on his spiritual journey, he just saw the physical forms of the mountains, rivers etc. But once he started experiencing the energy behind them, he saw them all as manifestations of the very same energy.

Upon enlightenment, he saw that all matter was the very energy itself, that is the real nature of them all.

Krishna says whatever is permanent and real was intangible before it became tangible and again it will become intangible. Everything is in a state of becoming something else. At every moment we die and are reborn; millions of cells in our body-mind system die everyday and are reborn. Yet, through all this change there is continuity. There is a continuity that we cannot see, touch or feel. What we see as manifested, as this body and mind, hides from us the process of constant change that happens within us, as well as the continuous thread that holds the whole process together.





## The Present Alone Matters!

*Q: Swamiji, please be very clear (Swamiji comments: Oh! here we are getting instructions first!). Are Krishna and Christ the same? Both were born in confined places. Krishna was born in Mathura; Christ in a place called Mathiria. Both were shepherds and so on. If so, please explain.*

A historical controversy! I do not know the historical part because I am not a historian! I can only say that spiritually they are one and the same. I can only say in terms of spirituality, not historically. As I do not know history, I cannot make a controversial statement. At the level of consciousness, they are the same.

There are stories that the idea of Christ's life is built around the Bhāgavatam, the famous book of Hindu mythology which includes the life of Krishna. We do not know the truth behind these stories. You may have heard of this beautiful book, The Da Vinci Code. If any of you have read this book, you will find it is controversial, but at the same time solid. The writer is clear about what he says. We are not able to deny it completely. I read it, and honestly, I am not able to deny the contents. There are so many things he says which make sense.

There are books written and research done about Christ's time and life after crucifixion, where he was between the ages of 13 and 29.

A couple of interesting things I read in the book:

The theory goes that Christ had his training in a Buddhist monastery in Puri. The Sermon on the Mount is an exact replication of a Pali sutra which is repeated every morning in that monastery as a prayer. In this way, many research reports keep coming out but the only thing I can say is that at the consciousness level, they are both the same.

Recently, there have been documentaries aired on BBC that Christ after crucifixion, was taken to Kashmir, where he lived till he was eighty. They even showed the tomb where he was buried. This was based on a lot of researched data.

The fact is that the earliest documentation of the life and death of Christ was made a few centuries after he died. It is known that there was a lot of selection in terms of what was officially accepted by the Christian Church, from the vast material that was available as the historical evidence relating to Jesus.

But as I said, the energy of all enlightened masters is one and the same. Their consciousness is identical.

*Q: Krishna says that the truth is seemingly tangible in the middle and intangible in the beginning and the end. If he is referring to past, present and future, the past is also clear to us. Why is the beginning unclear then?*

We arise from energy; we disappear into energy; for a while we live as matter even though we are energy.

Our senses can perceive only the material world as long as they are focused on external objects. They can only interact with material objects and experience material pleasures. That is the way our mind is programmed. So tangibility to us is what we can perceive through our senses.

It is when we go inwards that we can feel the energy within. When we lose our external identity and open ourselves to the universal energy, we too can feel that we are energy. We can understand who we truly are now, in the past and in the future. That is what meditation can do for you. It can take you through the inner journey of awareness that makes the truth tangible in the past and future as well.

When you say that the past is clear to you, even what you remember of your own past life is actually very selective. Only 5-10% of what your senses perceive is stored consciously. The rest is buried deep within. Ironically, the most powerful experiences, whether of pain or pleasure, are rarely in the conscious realm. They are buried deep within and come up without any conscious effort when the unconscious decides it is the right time to reveal them. This is why we are driven by addictions and phobias that are so difficult to let go of.

Most of the time, we look into the future that is totally hazy through the mirror of our past. It is like driving a car while watching only the rear view mirror. You know where you will end up if you do that! Yet, that is how we drive our own lives.

The present is the only tangible moment. Not because it is about the material body-mind which exists in the present moment, but because only when you are in the present you are centered in your energy. Your body-mind system can focus inwards into your inner energy system only when you are in the present moment. It is because only in this state does your inner chatter stop.

Your thoughts are nothing but the movement of your mind from past to future and back from future to past. It is the constant oscillation of the mind that you call thought and which I term inner chatter. Once you settle into the present moment your thoughts cease and inner chatter stops. You are then in sync with your own energy.

Meditation is the key to bring you into this state.

*Q: I read somewhere that the whole concept of rebirth is negative. It is all about the continuance of suffering. All those who believe in rebirth are desperately trying to get out of it. So, what is the point in believing in it?*

Rebirth is neither negative nor positive. It is a phenomenon of existence in which the spirit continues to exist as energy and the body-mind perishes as matter. There is nothing that anyone can do about it, in the same manner that there is nothing that can be done about death. Death happens and so does rebirth.

If you are at least aware that you are born again and again as a result of unfulfilled desires, then you can make an attempt to fulfill or transcend your desires so that you can be free from this cycle of life, birth and death, called *samsāra* in *vedic* science. One part of what you said is correct. People who are wise try to get out of this cycle of life and death so that they are liberated into energy forever. The concept of Self-realization and enlightenment follows from this effort.

Buddha refers to this again and again. He attributes suffering to desires and teaches methods to overcome these desires and get out of the cycle of birth and death. As I have mentioned elsewhere, the desires Buddha talks about are the

wants that we pick up through our conditioning in this lifetime, the *saṁskāras* that bind us. Once these *saṁskāras* are dissolved we are out of the clutches of *samsāra*.

It is not a matter of believing or not believing. Truth does not change if you do not believe it. Medieval Europe believed that the Earth was flat and that the Sun revolved around the Earth. So, you too are at liberty to believe that there is no rebirth and that this lifetime is the end of the road for you.

If you believe so, would that make you a better person? Would that belief make you happier? In reality it makes you desperate. All that you wish to acquire, enjoy and fulfill has to be done during this one lifetime. This obsession fills you with greed and fear. The understanding that one's spirit lives on as energy even after the body-mind perishes, gives one far greater freedom.

When you realize that you are forever and do not live and die only once, you don't need to be desperate and make choices that you regret later. There is no last train that you need to catch. You can lead a choiceless life, because life is forever.

This is the freedom that our *vedic* sages experienced and transmitted so that others can experience the same bliss.



## Code Of The Samurai

*2.31 You should look at your own duty as a **kṣatriya**.*

*There is nothing higher for a ksatriya than a righteous war. You ought not to hesitate.*

*2.32 O Partha, happy indeed are the **kṣatriya** who are called to fight in such a battle without seeking;*

*This opens for them the door to heaven.*

*2.33 If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will incur the sin of having abandoned your duty, and you will lose your reputation.*

*2.34 People too will remember your everlasting dishonor, and to one who has been honored, dishonor is worse than death.*

*2.35 The great generals will think that you have withdrawn from the battle because you are a coward.*

*You will be looked down upon by those who had thought much of you and your heroism in the past.*

*2.36 Many unspeakable words would be spoken by your enemies reviling your power.*

*Can there be anything more painful than this?*

*2.37 Slain, you will achieve heaven; victorious, you will enjoy the Earth.*

*O son of Kunti, stand up determined to fight.*

*2.38 Pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat – treat them all the same.*

*Do battle for the sake of battle. You shall incur no sin.*

Krishna works on Arjuna at two levels. At one level He talks to Arjuna at the superconscious plane educating him on what the ultimate truth is.

He talks to Arjuna about how life does not end with the death of the body, about how the undying and indestructible spirit lives on. Here, Krishna addresses Arjuna's fears about killing his relatives and elders and teaches him that what he considers to be the end of life for these people is just one step in their journey.

Krishna then descends to the practical level at which Arjuna exists. Krishna explains to Arjuna why, from a societal point of view, he should not run away from the battlefield, but instead, stay on and fight as behoves a warrior. Krishna here addresses Arjuna as the *kṣatriya*, the warrior.

In each society there are groups of people who are the designated protectors of that society. They are the warriors, the soldiers, who defend their country and countrymen. In the same manner, there are others who are designated as clerics and priests, as teachers and counselors, as traders and businessmen and as workers and manual laborers.

In most modern societies these are commercial as well as societal divisions. There are commercial classifications to the extent that they are the means to one's livelihood, based on one's acquisition of skills and education with the expectation of pursuing such a career and vocation. However, they subsequently become societal classifications as well as these careers become the tools of building wealth and status. Even in modern societies the wealth and name thus acquired are passed on through generations, even if those born subsequently have done nothing to earn the wealth and status and do not have the capability to maintain them.

In ancient India, the system of education was the *gurukul* system, in which young children stayed with a master and learned both material and spiritual skills. This education started very early, as early as three and latest by seven, when the children were left in the master's care by their parents. The master gauged the capability and aptitude of each child and trained the child in an appropriate manner. The vocation of the parent or father was not a major criterion in deciding upon the skills to be imparted to the child. The master determined the child's aptitude by its own behavior and through such studies as astrology.

The *varṇa* or caste system practiced by the Hindus from time immemorial had its roots in this *gurukul* education. Unfortunately, over time, caste determination became based on birthright. The son of a warrior was assumed to be a warrior,

irrespective of his capabilities, aptitude or inclination. So, the four *varṇa* or castes that are *brāhmaṇa*, the priest and teacher, *kṣatriya*, the ruler and warrior, *vaiśya*, the trader and businessman, and *śūdra*, the worker, became rigid social structures based on birthright.

This corruption of such a scientific practice has led to many social inequalities and injustices. The son of a *brāhmaṇa* has no right to call himself a *brāhmaṇa*, unless he has the aptitude and then the learning to be a teacher and a priest. In our ashrams, we now have many young men and women from different castes and religious groups who are being trained in what is considered the prerogative of the *brāhmaṇa* caste.

When Krishna refers to Arjuna as a *kṣatriya*, he is referring to the entire personality of Arjuna, the great warrior, which has been decided only partly by birth and mostly by training based on his aptitude. Arjuna is the quintessential warrior, the samurai, who knows no fear, and yet is now disturbed by issues of whether he is doing right or wrong by fighting against his kinsmen. The code of the *kṣatriya*, as with the code of the *samurai* (the professional Japanese warriors of earlier days) and all soldiers even today, is a professional code as well. Once you are in the army, you fight irrespective of who the enemy is. Rights and wrongs no longer apply.

Krishna says, 'Fight! You are a *kṣatriya*. By fighting as your duty demands, you earn merits and go to heaven. If you run away from this war you commit a sin. You will also be termed a coward and people who know you will laugh at you. You will be dishonored, and for a *kṣatriya*, dishonor is far worse than death. Do not worry about victory or defeat. If you are defeated and slain you will ascend to heaven. If you are victorious, you will enjoy material benefits in this world itself. Therefore, fight as it is your duty as a *kṣatriya*.'

Krishna says to treat pain and pleasure, gain and loss, victory and defeat all the same. He says to fight without worrying about the outcome. To fight is your duty. When the *Paramātmā* – supreme Soul says this, it means that Arjuna does not have to worry about right and wrong, about sin or merit.

Isn't fighting, isn't killing people a sin, you may ask. Then why is it that Krishna encourages Arjuna, not merely encouraged, but actually forces Arjuna to fight and kill? What is the operative logic here, you may ask.

There is no logic. Krishna's exhortation is beyond human rationale. It is not what you do that matters. It is who you are that matters. An enlightened master can do no wrong even if he kills, because when he kills, it would be with awareness, not

for personal benefit. On the other hand, any average person, even while doing an act of kindness, may be doing something wrong.

You may have seen movies where an undercover policeman with a gun is arresting some dangerous criminals and suddenly a cop in uniform shows up. This uniformed cop asks the undercover cop to put his hands up and in the confusion the criminals escape.

This may seem funny in a movie, but it happens all the time in real life! You think you are doing something very good based on your sense perceptions and yet the reality of the situation may be far different.

The problem is that we do whatever we do with a motive. It is all outcome-based. 'What is in it for me?' is the million dollar question. We do things either out of fear or greed. These are the two most powerful motivators, the carrot and the stick. What applies to a donkey applies even more relevantly to a human being.

Krishna is not worried about what you do, He is concerned only about who you are. If your actions are innocent of motives, whatever you do is right. If what you do is motivated by fear and greed, pain and pleasure, victory and defeat, you can do nothing right. Whatever we do for gain is sinful.

What if you were in a totally strange place for a very short period and you know that nothing you do will have any repercussions? Will you have any inhibitions based on what your conditioning has been? What will your behavior be like?

What happens when the fear of loss of reputation and loss of identity disappears? Will you be the same person?

What happens when you have an Aladdin's lamp with a genie, which makes all your dreams come true? How long will the excitement last when you know that whatever you wish will happen? Will your greed still last?

Fear and greed are strong motivators because we are not centered; we are not sure about ourselves; we do not know who we are. Here Krishna is breaking that mould. Act without fear and greed, He says. Do not worry about consequences. This is against all societal and religious conditioning.

Krishna, as the transcendental *Parabrahman*, is not concerned about the practical and societal consequences of Arjuna walking out of the battlefield. He is only concerned about what that would do to Arjuna's inner self. If Arjuna had truly been steeped in *ahimsa*, non-violence, Krishna would have never attempted to



persuade Arjuna into violence. Arjuna however, was trying to avoid fighting, not because of any moral and conscientious objection, but out of emotional attachment to his kinsmen and others arising out of his own identification with them.

In these verses, Krishna is trying to bring Arjuna out of his dilemma, his depression, his confusion, that has obscured his normally clear vision. Krishna is trying to get Arjuna to transcend his conditioned actions based on fear and greed. He is trying to get him to act without worrying about the outcome.



## Jump First, Think Later

*Q: Is it normal to speak less and seek silence as **sādhana** or spiritual practice progresses?*

There is a Zen saying, 'When I was not meditating, a tree was a tree and a mountain was a mountain. When I started meditation, they were both not what they were. When I finished meditation and became enlightened, the tree was again a tree and the mountain was a mountain.'

Before the *sādhana* you speak a lot. After enlightenment, you may speak a lot but with a totally new awareness, but during *sādhana* people usually tend to become silent.

As your spiritual awareness progresses, you may find one of two things.

In the past, you had an opinion about everything and you *had* to express it. If you did not you felt inadequate. You felt that others will not respect you unless you stood up for yourself, expressed yourself loudly and volubly, and most importantly, argued so that the other person felt small and withdrew.

As your energy level increases with spiritual practice, you are more centered and you do not feel the need to prove yourself anymore. You also realize that words can harm far more than physical attacks. So you settle into yourself and become silent.

At another level, you find that you can communicate just as well and perhaps better with others of similar energy just being silent. The need to talk reduces.

Either way, you find silence golden.

*Q: Krishna continuously keeps calling Arjuna a kṣatriya and goads him to fight. I still feel Krishna is violent.*

I have talked about this partly earlier. Let me explain more clearly.

First let us understand the word non-violence. The moment you say 'I' and 'mine', you *are* violent. Please understand what kind of beings we are. We can be intellectual or emotional or at the being-level.

During our lives we have stages of each of these three characteristics. How do we know what type of beings we are? The moment you ask this question, be very clear, you are intellectual. Emotional people will never have this question and people at the being-level will not even have this as a doubt.

Before you are married you may be an intellectual. Take the case of young men, especially a young Indian college student. Invariably, he does not prostrate or bow down before anyone and he considers traditional actions unworthy. He simply stands and looks while his parents pay their respects. Of course, I do not expect this from anyone, as this physical action is not of great consequence. But I always say to myself, 'Just wait till you get married, then we shall see!' Two years later the same young man, now married, falls flat at the feet! In just two years he has grown so much and is now so obedient and polite!

So, before marriage you are intellectuals and after marriage you invariably develop your emotional side as well.

Krishna knows very well that Arjuna is talking emotionally. Emotions of fear and greed have taken over and Arjuna is scared to face the consequences if he goes ahead with the fight because the opponents are his own relatives whom he is attached to. Arjuna wants to run away from the battlefield, not because he is a believer in non-violence, but because of his identity with his kinsmen and elders, because of his identification with these people. He would have had no problem battling them had he not known them, had he not been associated with them. Arjuna wants to run away because of this false identification which breeds violence.

Krishna would never persuade Arjuna to stay on and fight if truthfully, Arjuna proceeded from nonviolence. Krishna enlightens Arjuna to the falsehood of his beliefs and destroys his false belief that he is proceeding from nonviolence that had risen out of his attachment to his own identity.

Secondly, you need to have a clear understanding of how the *varṇa* system that we deride now as the caste system evolved in our *vedic* culture.

Krishna is referring to Arjuna's character, his mindset and his conditioning when he addresses him as a *kṣatriya*. A *kṣatriya* is fearless; a *kṣatriya* is power and courage personified; a *kṣatriya* acts before he thinks. However, now Arjuna does not act and talk as behoves a *kṣatriya*; he is behaving like a *brāhmaṇa*.

A *brāhmaṇa* is an intellectual. A *brāhmaṇa* is focused on knowledge, inner truth. The scriptures are his guideline. His behavior is based on *satva*, peace. Instead of being a commissar that is his natural state, Arjuna is now trying to quote scriptures and behave like a saint. Krishna is pulling him back into his natural state.

To a *kṣatriya*, a warrior, the greatest dishonor is to experience and express fear. Krishna says that such behavior will not only taint Arjuna in this life, but in the lives hereafter as well.

In the ancient *vedic* system four *varṇas* were classified. The *brāhmaṇa* were the intellectuals who read and maintained the knowledge of the scriptures and focused within. *Kṣatriya* were the warriors and rulers who took care of the *brāhmaṇa* and other people, their citizens and wards. *Brāhmaṇa* acted out of *satva guṇa* (calmness and peace) and *kṣatriya* out of *rajas guṇa* (passion and aggression). One acted with his word and the other acted with his sword.

The other two classifications were the *vaiśya* and *śūdras*. *vaiśyas* were focused on wealth creation and maintenance, the traders and businessmen. *Śūdras* were the workers in various fields focused on service.

There never was an attempt to compare one group with another, positively or negatively. The classification was based on natural aptitude. It was a very advanced system of training a person for the vocation for which that person was best suited. It was not hereditary. The son of a *brāhmaṇa* could as well be a *śūdra* if his aptitude was different.

A child was handed over to a master before the age of seven in the *vedic gurukul* system. The master identified the aptitude of the child and classified him as per the *varṇa* system. There was no bias. It was a very scientific system. Though the system was not designed to be hereditary, the very conditioning increased the probability of a child born to a *brāhmaṇa* parent being a *brāhmaṇa*. It made no difference though, since each group understood its unique purpose and did not in any way consider itself superior or inferior to another group.

Over time the system got corrupted, especially when foreign invaders introduced their cultures into our country. To protect themselves, people made the *varṇa* system hereditary. This became even worse when the *gurukul* system was destroyed

by the British in their attempt to conquer the Indians. They realized that the only way to do it was to destroy their culture, and the best way to destroy the culture was to destroy its base of education and knowledge transfer. Millions of *gurukul* centers that existed even some five hundred years ago have been reduced to the few thousand in existence today.

It is the invaders as well who dramatically vilified and painted the *varṇa* system black. This system was what they themselves used as the guild system in their country, which helped them prosper. In the same manner that they divided and conquered India, they also divided the different *varṇa* groups and set them against each other.

The actions of the British still haunt India in many ways. In regions like Tamil Nadu, hatred created between *varṇa* groups resulted in destructive atheism and a total lack of respect for the *vedic* culture that had sustained the country for many thousands of years.

In today's society where one's value is measured purely in terms of dollars, it is the *vaiśya* group who would be the most sought after. Countries are no longer ruled by persons with a warrior mindset. They are ruled by people who are commercially and politically savvy, the *vaiśya* class. However, in the *vedic* tradition, there was no superiority of one class over another, unlike what we see throughout the world today.

It is not that someone born in one class could not become an expert in another field. Drona was a *brāhmaṇa*, but became the most feared of all warriors. Buddha and Mahavira were from the *kṣatriya* class but became enlightened masters through the path of knowledge. But Krishna is now trying to keep Arjuna on track as a *kṣatriya*. There must be a reason for this.

Much depends on the desires with which the spirit leaves the earlier body and the *prārabdha karma* (desires to be fulfilled in this birth) with which it enters the present one. This *prārabdha* could even lead in a direction different from the environment into which one is born. This is what happened to Buddha, Drona and others. This usually happens fairly early in life before too much conditioning happens through the environment. In the case of Arjuna, this was not so.

Arjuna was a prince who excelled as a *kṣatriya*. He was the greatest archer and a fearless warrior. His natural state and *prārabdha* was that of a *kṣatriya*. This is why Krishna time and again pulls him back into that mould. This is why He tells Arjuna that it is dishonorable for him to run away from the battlefield. He tells him to stand up and fight.

Is Krishna being violent?

Krishna is neither violent by Himself nor is He goading Arjuna to violence. As a master and the greatest of all masters, Krishna is focused on only one thing, which is to help Arjuna realize his own potential. Each of us is unique. A Buddha cannot become an Arjuna. An Arjuna cannot become a Mahavira. The master is fully aware of the inner potential of each individual disciple. He knows where that disciple has to go and how. He chisels him into that form and path, which ultimately takes the disciple to enlightenment.

This is what Krishna is doing here on the battlefield. If for one moment Krishna thought that Arjuna was sincere in his desire to walk away from the fight, He would never have urged him to fight. Arjuna was not shying away from killing. He was reluctant to kill a few people whom he felt attached to. This is not non-violence. This reluctance is arising from the fear of losing one's possessions, one's relationships and ultimately one's own identity.

Arjuna's behavior is based on ego, the fear of losing his identity. This is not nonviolence; it is a form of inner violence that differentiates between one and another. Arjuna's reluctance arises from discrimination between those whom he considers his own and others who do not belong to him.

You may ask how you can call this fear violence. It is this fear of losing one's identity that breeds terrorism. Terrorists are not courageous people. They are cowards who are desperately clinging to some actions and philosophy that can justify their existence and that can justify their importance. Their fear erupts as violence. It is like a rat being cornered. Even a rat will bare its teeth when its identity or life is threatened. Fear and the survival instinct breed violence.

This can be proved scientifically as well with the theory of the fight or flight response. It is the same chemical, adrenalin, which causes both reactions. Any trauma or fear makes a part of the brain, the hypothalamus, trigger the master gland or pituitary which causes the release of adrenalin into the blood stream. Adrenalin activates the extremities, hands and feet. Depending upon the situation, you use one or the other or both!

You either run with fear or fight with fear!

Krishna does not want Arjuna to operate out of fear. He is dissolving the fear that fills Arjuna. He is transforming Arjuna so that he will act out of conscious awareness instead of unconscious patterns and fear. Krishna wants Arjuna to move away from the unconscious fear that has gripped him. The only way to do that is to bring him to his natural state, which is that of the *kṣatriya*.

*Q: I have read that we have three bodies. You had talked about seven energy layers. Are these similar?*

In our first level course or Life Bliss Program, LBP Level 1, we cover the seven energy centers in the body, the seven *cakras*. These *cakras* govern our emotions and therefore our behavior. They control our emotional and physical wellbeing. When these centers are blocked we feel uncomfortable; we are in dis-ease. When these centers are energized, we get well and we move into ease.

In the second level LBP 2 course, called Nithyananda Spurana Program or NSP, you are taken through the seven energy layers in the body-mind system that the spirit passes through at the time of its departure from the body. The three bodies you refer to are part of these layers.

These three bodies are the physical body, the subtle or etheric body and the causal body, corresponding to the first, fourth and fifth energy layers. These are termed as *sthūla śarīra* or gross body, *sūkṣma śarīra* or subtle body and *kāraṇa śarīra* or causal body. They also correspond to the states of wakefulness, dreaming and deep sleep respectively.

Our body-mind system operates at the first two levels, the gross and subtle layers. The gross body is the material or physical body and the subtle body is the collection of our emotions and thoughts. We can see, touch and feel the physical body; it is made of flesh and blood. In comparison, the subtle body is atomic; it is intangible.



The subtle body comes from the past life, as desire, and becomes the *prārabdha karma* in the present body. The subtle body enters the gross body in the womb. The subtle body searches and finds a suitable carrier and when it does, it enters that gross body in the womb.

During the process of death and rebirth it is the subtle body layer that travels. It is not the Self, the soul that travels. The soul energizes the subtle layer, the etheric layer, which moves from one physical body to another. It is like a train driven by electricity. The electricity

is the soul, which powers the train system. The train carriages and what is inside are the subtle and gross layers.

At death, the subtle layer and the gross layer perish. The spirit is separated from these two layers. The physical and emotional boundary that was created between the soul and the *Brāhman*, the individual energy and the cosmic energy, disappears. It is not that the soul and *Brāhman* were unconnected before; they were not; but the body-mind system, the ego and identity, created a barrier of ignorance between them, veiling the realization that we are one with the cosmic energy.

Without the subtle layer, the physical layer cannot exist. It cannot exist in the fashion that we know. Spiritual efforts aimed at Self-realization are exercises to destroy the subtle layer. Once the subtle layer is destroyed, once the collection of emotions, expectations, unfulfilled desires, thoughts and *samskāras* which form this subtle layer are destroyed, then the boundary between us and the cosmic energy disappears. We become one with the Divine. We reach our natural state.

The causal layer is the transition point between the present life and the next. It is the passage to death. Once this layer is crossed the spirit cannot return to the previous physical and subtle bodies. During the transition one is in a coma and can still return. This experience of the causal layer is the near death experience of those who experience death but do not die. Every night during deep sleep, the body-mind system passes through to this layer and returns. It is a regenerative process without which we cannot survive.

With meditation we transcend these three layers into a fourth state, the state of consciousness with awareness but no mind and no thoughts. This is the state of the soul, realization of the Self.





## What Matters Is Experience, Not Knowledge

*2.39 What has been taught to you concerns the wisdom of **Sāṅkhya**. Now, listen to the wisdom of yoga.*

*Having known this, O Partha, you shall cast off the bonds of action.*

*2.40 There is no wasted effort or dangerous effect from this.*

*Even a little knowledge of this, even a little practice of yoga, protects one from great fear.*

*2.41 O Joy of the Kuru, all you need is single-pointed determination;*

*The thoughts of the irresolute are many, branched and endless.*

*2.42 Foolish ones speak a lot, taking pleasure in eulogizing the words of Vedas, O Partha, saying, 'There is nothing else.'*

*2.43 Men of little knowledge are very much attached to the flowery words of the Vedas that recommend various fruitful actions for elevation to heavenly planets, resulting in high birth, power, and so forth.*

*Being desirous of sense gratification and opulent life, they say that there is nothing more than this to living.*

*2.44 Those whose minds are diverted by such teachings and who cling to pleasure and lordship,*

*Are not determined or resolute and are not fit for steady meditation and **samādhi**.*

*2.45 O Arjuna! Be you above the three attributes that the Vedas deal in; free yourself from the pairs of opposites and be always in sattva (goodness),*

*Free from all thoughts of acquisition or preservation, be established in the Self.*

*2.46 The sage who has known the Self has little use for the vedic scriptures as these are like a pool of water in a place that is already in flood.*

Krishna begins his teachings of *Karma Yoga* to Arjuna in these verses. These verses should be read carefully by those who believe solely in scriptural authority, based on their superficial understanding of what has been said.

Krishna unequivocally says here, 'Forget the *Vedas*.'

He says, 'All the knowledge contained in the *Vedas* is of as much use as water in a flood to one who has realized himself. The *Vedas* are limiting; they concern the three attributes, *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the attributes of calmness, aggressive action and lazy inaction. The time has come now to move beyond these attributes; at least move from *rajas* into the state of *satva*, calmness.'

'Do not quote to Me what the scriptures say,' Krishna says. He continues, 'Do not tell me about what you should do and should not do in this life through rituals and practices that will please the deities and ancestors so that you will benefit materially in this life and spiritually in some after-life. All this is for people with limited understanding of their own Self, people who have not experienced the Truth. These are the people who still hanker after fulfilling sensual pleasures and achieving name and fame.'

'Move beyond them to the single-pointed determination of yoga that I shall teach you,' Krishna says, 'and be established in a state where you are no longer concerned about creation, preservation and destruction. You will be beyond these and reach the state of *Parabrahman*.'

Only a master, the master of the universe, can say such things and get away with it! Krishna's authority as He speaks these words is compelling. He is casting away the divinely transmitted scriptures, the *Vedas*, to instill truth in the mind of Arjuna.

It is the truth as spoken by the Divine who Himself has all the knowledge contained in the *Vedas*.

The *Vedas*, the collection of knowledge as experienced by the great sages, the *ṛṣis*, was conveyed for generations by word of mouth and was referred to as *śruti*, 'that which was heard'. This knowledge was really experiential knowledge. The real meaning of the *śruti* is that it was heard internally, not as an external expression. The moment an experience is expressed, it is no longer the truth of that experience.

All great masters, the enlightened ones, have had the same experience of *nityānanda* – eternal bliss. However, each expressed it differently. Mahavira walked in ecstasy without clothes. Buddha taught very differently from Mahavira. Both were princes from the same period. The truth of one master is not and cannot be the same as that of another master.

As the masters shared their experiences through body language and verbal language with close disciples, different interpretations arose. *Vedānta*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Mīmamsa* and other such philosophical paths had their origins in the *Vedas*, as learned men over generations contemplated upon these truths and added their own learning and sometimes their experiences.

All the great scriptures, *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads* and Gita, exist at different levels of understanding, seven levels, to be precise, depending on the energy level that one dwells in. At the highest level one understands that all that there is, is ONE. There is no experiencer, experienced or experience as separate entities at the highest energy level; ALL is ONE.

Krishna refers to that truth here in these verses, the truth of the highest energy. 'Do not be carried away by the apparent ritualistic approach of the *Vedas* as propounded by half learned scholars,' the master says, 'go beyond; go beyond duality. All these seem to bring joy but are transient; that joy is the brief intermission between periods of sorrow. Go beyond and seek the firm truth of the ONE, the union, that is yoga,' He says to Arjuna.

'There is something beyond the superficial understanding,' Krishna says, 'that will take you beyond the three human attributes of *satva* (calmness), *rajas* (active action) and *tamas* (passive inaction) and into liberation arising out of true understanding. At that stage you will be beyond creation, preservation and destruction, as these would have no meaning in the understanding of the permanence of the ultimate energy.'

Krishna finally says, 'Once you understand and realize *Brahman*, all the knowledge of the *Vedas* that you quote so passionately, will be of as much relevance to you as a lake in the midst of an ocean.'

Krishna is leading Arjuna step by step as if teaching a baby to walk. One by one the master demolishes Arjuna's arguments and fears, dispelling his dilemma.

These first baby steps address Arjuna's intellect, for that's all Arjuna has been using till now. Krishna shows Arjuna how inadequate and meaningless his intellectual knowledge is. It is all borrowed, with no experiential backing. He now seeks to lead him into experiential knowledge.



## Half Knowledge Is More Dangerous Than Ignorance

*Q: Swamiji, if Krishna is the Jagat Guru, Lord of the universe, why was he only with the Pandava and Kaurava princes? Why did he not help the world?*

Again and again, Krishna happens on planet Earth, but nowadays He simply does not bring his peacock feather! Krishna is the only master who has assured us that He will be here again and again.

*To protect the good and to destroy the evil, and to establish righteousness*

*I shall incarnate again and again.*

Krishna always fulfills his promises. It is only *you* who need a little openness to experience Him, that is all. Never think that He is not here.

A group of devotees was telling Ramakrishna that if they had been there during the period of Chaitanya, then they would have received his divine love. Ramakrishna replied that there were some fools who were sitting before Chaitanya and saying that they missed Krishna! These were the same people who were now before Ramakrishna saying that they had missed Chaitanya! These were the people who told Ramana Maharshi that they had missed Ramakrishna, and today, some of these people are sitting here saying that they missed Ramana!

Understand that all you need is a little openness and sensitivity. If you can, you may listen to Krishna's flute here and now! If you miss it, you are missing it, but Krishna comes down again and again to fulfill His promise. With a little more openness and sensitivity, you can experience Him wherever you are.

Krishna's Gita had very little to do with Pandava and Kaurava princes. He delivered it to every ordinary being, so that this individual mortal can realize that he too is an inherent part of universal energy. Krishna has done His job by giving

you Gita. His purpose is to help the entire world across time and space. It is upto you to sit up and listen.

Do not sit here and complain or wonder what there is for you in Gita. Open your mind and receive. You will be helped. That is the promise of the master.

***Q: How can Krishna who is Vedas Himself denigrate the Vedas saying that they are useless?***

The differentiation that Krishna makes here is between acquired knowledge and experiential knowledge. He refers to the *Vedas* and *Sāṅkhya* as acquired knowledge, at least insofar as Arjuna and the rest of humanity are concerned.

As I mentioned before, no experience remains an experiential truth once it is expressed. Acquired knowledge can never be your truth. It is someone else's truth, not yours.

In Mahabharata there is this description of how Duryodhana borrowed the invincible armor of his teacher Drona.

Jayadratha killed Abhimanyu, Arjuna's son. Arjuna swore to kill Jayadratha before the next sunset. Arjuna was wreaking havoc in his fury and Duryodhana wailed in frustration to Drona, the Commander of his army. Since Drona was protecting Jayadratha he lent his invincible magical armor to Duryodhana and told him to stop Arjuna's onslaught.

When Arjuna rained arrows from his mighty *gāṇḍīva* (Arjuna's bow) at Duryodhana, they seemed to have no effect at all. Arjuna understood what had happened. He cut loose Duryodhana's chariot from the horses, got Duryodhana down on foot upon the ground and disarmed him. He then pierced parts of his body not covered by the armor till Duryodhana fled the battlefield.

Like borrowed armor, borrowed knowledge is useless; in fact it can be more dangerous. It can boost one's ego to the point of self-destruction.

That is what happens to many philosophers and preachers. With the superficial knowledge that they have acquired by reading the scriptures, they believe that they have the same powers as the masters who experienced and expressed those scriptures. They consider themselves experts in *Vedānta*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Mīmamsa* and so on, and argue endlessly with no idea of what they are saying.

For someone who understands the oneness of divinity, there is no difference between what Shankara says and what Ramanuja says. There is no difference ultimately. It is only the approach that is different.

A small story:

In a bookstore there was a display of the commentaries of Shankara and Ramanuja on the Gita. A learned scholar went to the bookseller and demanded, 'Do you know the difference between the commentary by Shankara and the one by Ramanuja? I see that you have them both here.'

'Oh, just forty rupees Sir,' said the bookseller. Just one dollar, that is all!

That is all the difference! No need to be puffed up with knowledge as if one knows the difference. You may say Shankara is steeped in *gnana*, knowledge, and Ramanuja is steeped in *bhakti*, devotion. But no work of Ramanuja or anyone else can match the devotion of Sankara in his description of Devi in Soundaryalahiri. And Ramanuja's commentaries are just as logical and convincing as those of Shankara. An enlightened master's experience is always total. There is no separation as devotion, knowledge or meditation; all are paths of excellence. They all lead to the same point.

Krishna tells Arjuna here to go beyond the three attributes explained in the *Vedas*. Once expressed, even the scriptures are governed by the attributes; they are in *satva* or goodness. Krishna urges Arjuna to transcend them and also transcend like and dislike, in order to reach the state of equanimity of a sage. In that state, He says the knowledge gained from the *Vedas* becomes as irrelevant as water to a person sitting in a river.

Krishna is not degrading knowledge; He is not insulting the scriptures. He is telling Arjuna to go beyond acquired knowledge represented by the *Vedas* and *sāṅkhya* into the experiential knowledge of yoga. Here the yoga that Krishna is talking about is not the noun form of union, but the process of uniting.

Yoga is often referred to as union. As long as you call it this, you are only talking about the acquired knowledge of this great science and art. Only when you practice it, it becomes 'uniting'. This is what Krishna is referring to.

When a water drop in the ocean unites with the ocean, it is undifferentiated. It has no attributes anymore. It has merged with the source from where it came. As long as it feels separate and retains its individuality, however much it may know about where it came from, it will remain separate. It has to drop its identity. This

dropping of identity can never be intellectual; it can never be based on knowledge. It must be experiential; it must arise from the being.

*Q: Krishna mentions **sāṅkhya** as the knowledge that has been taught to Arjuna. He says He wants to take Arjuna through yoga. What is the difference?*

Arjuna had earlier quoted extensively from the scriptures in the first chapter of Gita, *Arjuna viśāda yoga*, Arjuna's dilemma. He said that if he killed his kinsmen, the Kuru race would be destroyed. The destruction of the lineage would bring in social evils. Social evils would then break up families and women would go astray. This would lead to degeneration of morals. Moral degeneration would lead to neglect of ritual offerings to ancestors. Finally there would be destruction. This was the sum and substance of Arjuna's understanding of what would happen if he continued to battle his foes.

Arjuna quoted the scriptures with his understanding of what he had been taught. Krishna refers to all this as *sāṅkhya*. *Sāṅkhya* here not only means the *sāṅkhya* philosophy developed by Sage Kapila, but encompasses all scriptural knowledge as well. As I said earlier, Krishna does not pull down this knowledge, but implicitly warns that knowledge without experience is dangerous. So, He says he will take Arjuna from knowledge into experience, from *sāṅkhya* into yoga.

The scriptures of all evolved cultures have arisen out of the experiential wisdom of enlightened beings. They get diluted and distorted as others without the same experience start expounding on that experience. Most others understand these scriptures at only the physical or gross level of knowledge, as it is understood literally. There are many other layers of understanding.

For instance, in this verse about *sāṅkhya* alone, one can get into endless arguments about the different interpretations of the scriptures without coming to any practical conclusion. Such argument is the territory of philosophers. What Krishna tries to do is take us beyond these arguments.





## Act, Don't Worry About The Result

*2.47 You have a right only to work, but never to its outcome.*

*Let not the outcome be your motive; but do not move into inaction.*

*2.48 O Dhananjaya! Do what you have to do with no attachment to outcome, being centered in yoga.*

*Be balanced in success and failure. Evenness of mind is yoga.*

The entire teaching of Bhagavad Gita can be summarized in the above two verses. The sheer brilliance of the wisdom of the universal master is reflected in these verses. Whenever I get a chance I refer to these verses to explain how one should lead one's life.

Krishna says many, many things in these few words. He says, 'You have the right and responsibility to work. You have no responsibility or right to the results of that work. Do not focus on the result and make it either an object of greed to chase or fear to stay away from. Do what you have to do with a centered mind without worrying about whether you will succeed or fail.'

Nothing more can be said or ever needs to be said about why and how one should perform.

Many people miscommunicate these verses and misunderstand these verses. There are people who stay away from work that they fear may end in adverse results. As long as the results can be positive either to themselves or others, they will carry out what they are assigned sincerely. But when they think that something bad may happen, they will stop doing whatever they are doing.

There are others who feel that doing nothing and disengaging from all action is the best solution, since all actions result in reactions and they accumulate *karma*.

Of course, almost all of us go on blindly doing whatever we are told to do when we see money or material rewards in front of us.

Krishna says, 'Stop! Who do you think you are? You are here to do My work. You have no right to take the results that are Mine.' His position is similar to that of a landowner who has sharecroppers working on the land. The sharecroppers have no right to anything but their sustenance wages. They need not worry about whether the land will yield well or not. All that they need to do is meet their own responsibilities in caring for the land. The landlord is the owner and ultimate beneficiary.

Awareness of what Krishna says here is the solution to almost all our day-to-day problems. Do what you have to do, without worrying about the results.

Do not act with hopes of a certain reward. Do not stop doing what you need to do because you are afraid of what may lie ahead.

Many of us in corporate life are focused on results. We will do something only if we think that it will be effective. We get caught in the result even before we start. So how do we define what is effective? For whom should it be effective?

Ninety percent of the time effectiveness is interpreted as something that benefits our self interest. Even if it benefits the organization, we do it because our performance will be recognized and we will be rewarded.

We learn this lesson early in life. Our parents and elders teach us this rule from infancy. 'Do this and we shall reward you; do that and we will punish you.' We are all brought up with the conditioning of what is good for us and what is bad for us, what will be successful or what will be a failure. Both success and failure are based on anticipated rewards or punishments.

Society operates on this principle of greed and fear to prevent us from doing actions that it does not want us to do. Religions do the same. Society threatens you with legal punishment here and now; religion threatens you with punishment in the hereafter, in hell. What is hell or heaven? Do they exist? No, they do not. Be very clear, they exist only in the minds of temple priests and preachers, so that they can download these images into you and control you. In fact, it is these people who are creating circumstances of hell for themselves by misleading people in these ways.

You are not true to yourself, your spirit, your energy, when you say one thing and do another. You do not walk your talk. The word *ācārya* in Sanskrit is the

word for a true teacher. It means one who walks with the student, one who walks his talk, one who is true to his word. When I ordain teachers of my practices and mission, I tell them only one thing: Walk your talk.

When you walk your talk and your talk is true, then you do not have a problem, but if the talk itself is untrue, then your walk and your actions will also be untrue. Ultimately it is all about the truth, your awareness, and being in the present moment. If what you preach comes from awareness and the truth of your own experience, and you act in accordance with that truth and awareness, then there is no differentiation between thoughts, words and actions. All will be true.

In the Bible there is the beautiful parable of the prodigal son.

A man has two sons. He splits his wealth between the two of them. One of them goes away with the money and spends it foolishly. The other stays with the father, takes care of the wealth and the father. Years later the son who went away comes back penniless. The father greets him warmly and throws a party to welcome him, and kills the 'fatted calf' on this special occasion. The other son is very annoyed and expresses his displeasure. The father says, 'You are always with me and you can count on my love; this boy, this prodigal son, needs my attention.'

If you look deeply into this parable, you will understand that the father is acting on the truth of his experience and the son is acting out of expectation.

The son feels he has been good, so he needs to be rewarded, and the prodigal son has been bad and needs to be punished.

We are all prodigal sons in this world. If the universal energy, which we call God, were to treat us based on what we may seem to deserve, then none of us have any hope! All of us will end in hell as the preachers promise.

What Krishna says here is the law of Nature. Nature just is. Nature just acts. Nature does not think about end results, successes or failures. Nature does not look for rewards, nor is it concerned about punishments.

People ask me, 'Swamiji, why is nature so cruel? Why are there natural disasters? Why do young children die?' The answer is what Krishna gives. Nature goes about its job without any thought about what the end result will be. What happens will happen. It is bound to happen. Nature follows its *dharma*, its path of righteousness. The problem is that we do not understand the laws of nature; we measure natural actions by our yardstick of logic.

You will then ask me, 'How do we know what to do? How do we know what is the path of righteousness? How do we know what our *dharma* is? Do we decide we are a *kṣatriya*, therefore we should fight and kill and not worry about who dies, or, we decide we are a *vaiśya*, a businessman, in which case our *dharma* is to make money without worrying about how we make money?'

No, Krishna is not talking about acting in selfishness; the universal master is talking about acting in awareness. He says, 'Be centered in yoga and drop all attachment to results; do what you have to do.'

What beautiful wisdom!

Yoga is union, union of man and divine. It is your realization of your own Self, your realization that you are divine. It is the state of awareness, the state of truth, the state of the present, when all that you do will be in righteous consciousness. When you perform with this awareness, and with no expectations, you will do what is right and just.

Our thoughts are unconnected, illogical and unpredictable. It is only when we link thoughts together that problems start and suffering happens. We remember a few out of hundreds of events and try to create a link between these few. Ninety percent of what we observe and experience is never recorded by our conscious memory; it just slips into our unconscious. So what we remember is ten percent of what we experience. Within that, what stays in our memory is always that which falls outside the pattern. If it is part of a normal pattern we will almost always ignore and forget the event.

Just think... when you drive to work, if you see a beggar every day at a street corner, after a while his presence is no longer noteworthy, am i right? It is only if he is absent that you will say to yourself, 'Hey, that beggar is not there today!' If your spouse is always in a grumpy mood, it is no surprise if he or she is in a grumpy mood today too. But if your spouse is specially caring and loving today, then that would be a miracle and noteworthy!

The trouble is that our mind picks up these exceptions, because that is what it remembers and uses to form a pattern. It forgets all other evidence and remembers only the exceptions. It then expects that exception to happen again. When it does not happen we are unhappy; if it does, we are happy till the next time when it does not happen.

So, do not link thoughts and create a shaft of thoughts. Unclutch from your thoughts, and automatically the mind will drop. This is the way to stay in the

present. Some of you misunderstand the word unclutched as 'not to do anything.' You think that to drop the mind is to be passive, inactive, doing nothing. No, not at all!

You can be doing nothing and yet occupy your mind fully. That is what they mean by saying that an idle mind is the devil's workshop. When you have nothing to do, what you end up doing is creating fantasies.

Inaction is not what is advised. Understand: When your mind drops, when thoughts cease, and your energy level is high, you cannot be inactive. You will act spontaneously out of sheer necessity. Physical and mental idleness are never produced by a no-thought mind. One must not link *idleness* with *calmness*. One with a no-thought mind dwells in peace, calmness and harmony, but is always alert to act spontaneously in the way that would best suit each situation and every moment.

With a no-thought mind comes great awareness and energy; idleness or lethargy is far from it. A confused and furiously overworked mind is constantly occupied with chatter and fantasies that can result in apathy and idleness.

When you are in a state of an unclutched mind, you are in awareness and you are in the present moment. Whatever you do in such a state of awareness would be the right thing to do. When you are in the present moment, regrets of your past and expectations of the future are absent from your mind. You are not influenced either by fear or greed regarding the outcome. You do what you have to do.

That is why Krishna says that you must act in the present moment. He says, 'Do not get attached to the results of your action, nor get attached to inaction, thinking that it could be an easy way out of this problem.'



## If Your Path Is Right, Your Destination Will Be Right

*Q: Swamiji, it is a natural response to look towards the end result whenever we do something. How can we give up thinking about the outcome?*

We always work for an outcome. We don't realize the irrationality of focusing our mind on the result before we even embark on the activity. We are so conditioned to this response that anything else seems impractical. How can we even consider doing something if we do not know what we are going to get out of it, you will ask.

What is wrong if you do something just for the sake of its own enjoyment? What about looking at the sunset or sunrise, for example? Can you even think of a result of watching the sun? Those of you who are so conditioned to the goal response may say, yes, we need to feel happy watching the sun. How then are you going to measure that happiness factor? What are you going to compare it against?

Let us learn from children and from enlightened masters who have become children again. Children are so curious and carefree. They have no expectations. They do things without knowing what will come out of it. They don't even have an idea of what an outcome is. Gradually, unfortunately, they learn from elders that each activity has an outcome. Then they start placing the outcome ahead of the activity. Then, and only then, do they lose their innate happiness.

Can we say that we shall live today only if we have a guarantee of tomorrow? Do we even know for sure that the sun will rise tomorrow? Do we know whether or not we will be breathing to see the sunrise tomorrow?

A small story:

Birbal, the wise minister of emperor Akbar of India, often got into trouble because the other ministers were jealous of him.

They told Akbar that Birbal could do anything. Akbar said, 'How can he do anything, he is only human?' They said, 'No, he is superhuman. See, he can make even a dog talk.' They pointed to a stray dog that was passing by the palace and said, 'Just threaten him, he can do it.'

Akbar called Birbal and told him that he knew Birbal had superhuman powers and unless he made the dog talk he would be put to death.

Birbal said, 'Sire, even with my powers I cannot do it immediately. Give me one year and I shall make the dog talk.'

Birbal's friends were shocked. They said, 'Birbal, what have you done? How can you make a dog talk? You will surely die!'

Birbal said, 'In a year's time many things can happen. The dog may die. The king may die. I may die. Who knows, the dog may even learn to talk!'

When you go with no expectations, whatever happens is a miracle.

There is a very deep truth that is embedded in this statement of Krishna. The core of all *Karma Yoga* is that you must act without expectation of result.

When we perform with expectation we are always focused on the future. We are in speculation. We are in greed. We are in fear as to whether we can achieve or not. The more we expect the more stressed we become. We cannot focus on what we are doing. The chances of a positive outcome diminish when we place excessive importance on the outcome.

When you are focused on the outcome, you lose the journey. When you are so focused on the destination you miss all the scenery that you pass by. Imagine that you are driving through a beautiful scenic landscape, by a seaside or a mountainside. There is so much to see and enjoy. You can only enjoy the scenery if your mind is attentive to the scenery. If instead, all that you can think of is when you would reach your destination and you are impatient, you may not even notice the landscape you are passing through.

When you are on a project under time pressure and someone is constantly looking over your shoulder to see whether you are performing right and performing on time, do you really think that you can perform well? The next time you are on such an assignment, convince yourself that you have all the time in the world and just focus on what you need to do instead of worrying about when you have to finish. You will find that you will complete the job in less time and in a better manner.

People think that living in an ashram is easy, especially when I have said in public that no one will be pressured to work. That is true, no one is pressured. But if you ask my ashramites they will tell you that they rarely go to bed before two or three in the morning, and they are up again at dawn for the morning routine! There is no pressure. I never ask them why they are not at the morning routine or why they have not completed some work. They do it because that is their passion. When you are engaged in what you are passionate about and yet not worried about the outcome, you can never be stressed. You will only be in bliss instead.

Working without a goal keeps you in the present moment. That is the secret. That is why time and again in the Gita, Krishna pleads with Arjuna to drop all expectations of outcome while in action. Action carried out this way is meditation. That is *Karma Yoga*. There is no better route to liberation than this.

Activity is a natural attribute of any living being. Otherwise you would be dead. Not acting is the state of *tamas*, of passive inaction and ignorance. You are in darkness. On the other hand, acting with a goal is *rajas*, of aggressive intent and activity. When you act without a goal, you are in the present moment, in *satva*, in peace and bliss. You are in the realm of light.

The master, the supreme guru, is leading you from darkness into light, from *tamas* into *satva* and beyond, by telling you to drop all expectations and act.

The highest state of *satva* is when you act without any expectation and with the outcome dedicated to the Divine. You then transcend *satva* and go beyond the three attributes. Krishna says, 'Do what you have to do and leave the result to Me.' He says, 'The fruits of your action belong to me.' This is the state of true surrender.

In Mahabharata, one of the most poignant scenes is when Draupadi is insulted in Dhritarashtra's court, when Duryodhana's brother, Dushassana tries to disrobe her. Draupadi cries out to Krishna, 'Krishna, save me, save my honor.' Her garment, the *sari* that she wears, gets longer and longer and Dushassana gives up finally. When she meets Krishna after that incident, Draupadi complains to Him and asks, 'Krishna, what took you so long to come to my rescue?'

Krishna says, 'My dear Draupadi, while you kept calling me, your hand was still clutching your garment in an attempt to help yourself. It is only when you gave up and completely surrendered, and with your hands held high, you called for Me, that I could come to your rescue. I could only come when you really surrendered to me.'



The Lord can only step in when your ego falls. This is the problem we all have. We are full of ego and the belief that we can control everything around us. We are so sure that we control the outcome of our actions. So, Krishna watches in compassion and waits. There is nothing He can do. Our ego prevents Him from reaching out.

Krishna has nothing to gain by telling you that you should sacrifice the results of your actions to Him. Don't think He wants to get rich and famous by grabbing the results of what you do. Out of deep compassion He tells us, 'Surrender to Me, surrender the outcome of all that you do to Me, drop your ego and reach out to Me; I am waiting and I shall come to you.'

When we do this, miracles happen!



## Stand Up And Be Counted

*2.48 O Dhananjaya, centered in yoga, balanced in success and failure, act with no attachment*

*Such evenness of mind is called yoga.*

*2.49 O Dhananjaya, beyond the yoga of wisdom, is action.*

*Wretched are those whose motive is the outcome; surrender yourself to wisdom.*

*2.50 Endowed with the wisdom of evenness of mind, move away from both good and evil deeds in this life;*

*Devote yourself to yoga. Skill in action is yoga.*

*2.51 The wise, having abandoned the outcome of their actions and possessed of knowledge, are freed from the cycle of birth and death.*

*They go to the state which is beyond all sorrow.*

*2.52 When your wisdom takes you beyond delusion,*

*You shall be indifferent to what has been heard and what is yet to be heard.*

*2.53 When you are not confused by what you have heard and your wisdom stands steady and unmoving in the Self,*

*You shall attain Self-realization.*

Krishna reiterates and emphasizes what He has said before and ends with a punchline.

He says, 'Act without attachment. Do not worry about success or failure in results. Center yourself in wisdom that takes you beyond action and the desire for

fruits of action. Once you are centered in wisdom you will act wisely. Once you give up attachment to results, you will be freed from the cycle of birth and death and you will be beyond sorrow.'

He then adds, 'When you are centered in wisdom you will no longer be deluded by what you hear. When you are no longer deluded by what you have heard, you are liberated.'

Krishna's immediate reference here is to the scriptures, the *Vedas*, an oral tradition. Arjuna earlier quoted these scriptures to Krishna, using them to emphasize the potential implications of his actions. Krishna chides Arjuna and says, 'Don't be confused by what you hear, even if it is supposed to be divine knowledge, the *Vedas*. Remember: If you are really centered in wisdom, you can never be deluded; you will be in awareness.'

Krishna's words resonate even today, and perhaps are far more relevant today. We are bombarded by information on all sides 24 hours a day, whether we like it or not. When something is stated repeatedly, especially by an authority, we tend to believe and accept it without reservation. No one even needs to force you to believe; your brain can be washed without any pressure, without coercion.

This is what many political and religious institutions use to instill fear and greed in people and make them obey their commandments. This is also what all marketing and advertising executives do to convince you about their products. This is what someone called a 'Hidden Persuader'.

A small story:

One day a man went to a mental hospital to visit his friend. There, he was chatting with another person for a long time. He asked him how long he had been there, how he was treated and such things. It was only when he returned from the hospital, that he learnt that the person with whom he was talking was a doctor and not a patient as he had assumed.

He rushed back to him and apologised, 'Sorry doctor, I will never go by appearances again.'

Understand, we all go by what we see, hear and read. But what we perceive may not be true at all.

The first response of most of us is to believe rather than doubt. This is especially true when what we see, hear and read was already instilled into us from childhood. If we are told again and again from childhood, as most of us are, that

we must listen to elders and read figures of authority, we grow up tending to do just that. It also happens that when what we see fits our fantasies, we don't bother to question.

Social, business and religious institutions use this power with great effect upon us. All religions and cultures have some book or other that is believed to be divine in origin and which must be obeyed implicitly. Does our inner experience tell us that whatever such a book says is relevant to us? More importantly, do we perceive it to be relevant today?

The *vedic* scriptures, the *śruti*, divine in origin, and the *smṛti*, rules and regulations laid down later by Manu and other sages, make no such claims. In fact, Hindu scriptures have both the humility and the arrogance to challenge us to transform ourselves according to the needs of the day, but stipulate that we first experience what is said. *Vedic* scriptures are not dead knowledge that is a burden upon us to abide by, but living guidelines that lead us into wisdom and liberation.

'So,' Krishna says, 'let the *Vedas* say what they want. You may hear whatever you must, but put what you hear, see, and read to the test of wisdom to go beyond delusion.'

He asks Arjuna to experience what he is exposed to and then decide what he must do. Krishna has already said in the Gita that He is the *Vedas*; He is knowledge, and yet He asks him to experiment and be guided by his inner wisdom, not by what he merely hears.

What courage, what authority! Only one who is so sure about the truth can say, 'Do not listen to what I say and how I act, but listen to your inner voice of truth born out of your own awareness and experience.'

One can write hundreds and thousands of pages but they will be meaningless when judged against these words of the master.

Some of the social and corporate institutions are quite direct in imposing their truths on us without giving us a chance to verify and accept them. 'You must fall in line with our mission if you want to be included in our corporate family,' they say. That is why *sanyāsis*, monks, get out of the rule-bound world, seeking the freedom of truth, but unfortunately, many get caught in the rules of religion. In society, wise men have been punished for expressing truths that they experienced which violated the beliefs then held by their leaders. Socrates, Copernicus, Da Vinci and many others suffered when they refused to accept what they heard. They became revered as visionaries years after they passed away.

In today's corporate world, people who stand up to what they believe is right when they see their companies doing unethical things, are referred to as 'whistle blowers'. Today it is a respected word. Even three decades ago this was a derogatory word, referring to traitors.

Why is such a person a traitor? Is it because he sees a truth that is at variance with what his institution, his company, the Government or religion tells him? If, in the wisdom of one's experience, one realizes a truth different from what one has heard, then, he not only has the right but also the responsibility towards humanity to tell them about that truth. The truth may be joyful or painful but it must be told.

Krishna is taking Arjuna on the path of enlightenment through simple steps. He says, 'Don't be inactive, do what you need to do. Do it with no expectations and no attachment to results. Do it with a centered mind and in wisdom. Do it with the wisdom of your own inner calling and not because of something you have heard. You will then go beyond all suffering and be liberated.'

These steps are so simple that everyone can practice them; in fact every one *should* practice them. Stay in the present moment with total awareness, without worrying about what you have heard and experienced in the past or what you expect to hear and experience in future. Stay fully centered in the experience of the present, and based on the truth of that experience, act. You can never go wrong. I promise you that.

***Q: Swamiji, in the corporate world everything revolves around budgets and objectives. How realistic is it to work without goals in such an environment?***

Please understand, not only is this possible, but this is also the only way to live in bliss without suffering.

You seem like a professional or a corporate person. You must have worked with some budget, forecast, milestones, goals, objectives and so on. How many times can you honestly say you achieved all that you planned and budgeted for? I have talked to many CEOs. They have been honest in saying that in their budgets what is met is the cost projections but not profit projections! This is a universal truth. Expenses always exceed the budget while profits fall below the budget.

Yet, the whole corporate system goes by budgets and stresses everybody in trying to meet them.

Krishna does not tell you to destroy budgets. He advises you not to be obsessed with budgets and goals. He tells you, 'Do what you have to, act for the sake of action, fight for the sake of the fight, without worrying about the outcome.'

He says to focus on the present moment.

This is the full circle your management science has now come to. Everyone talks about process control. What does that mean? It means to focus on what is happening at this moment! Unless you get what you are doing now right, there is no way you are going to do it right any time in the future. The future becomes the past through the present only.

I am told that it is only recently that the discovery has been made that even if you inspect 100% of what is produced in a factory or office, there will still be about 1% of defectives. You cannot reduce it to zero.

They say that the Japanese developed the method of focusing on the process instead of the product and this led to zero defects! All your great systems of Six Sigma are based on the belief of being in the present moment.

This is what Krishna said over 5000 years ago. 'Forget about the end product,' He said, 'Focus on the process, on what you need to do.' Can anything be simpler?

Krishna's message is very simple. He says: Surrender the outcome to Me and focus on your action. Why is it difficult to do? In fact this will lift a huge weight off your shoulders. You will no longer be constantly stressed about the result. Instead, you will focus on the activity and you will perform better.

Just try this approach. Relax completely and focus totally on what you have at hand at this point in time. Make sure that you do it with awareness. You will see that the results follow automatically without your having to worry about them.

Understand this: When your path is right, your destination will always be right. You will travel light and you will travel in bliss and whichever destination you reach will be the one most suited to you.



## Follow That Man!

*2.54 O Kesava! What is the description of one who stays in the present moment and is merged in the awareness of truth and wisdom?*

*How does one of steady wisdom speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?*

*2.55 Sri Bhagavan said:*

*O Partha, A man who casts off completely all the desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self by the Self,*

*He is said to be one of steady wisdom.*

*2.56 He whose mind is not disturbed by adversity, and who in prosperity does not go after other pleasures,*

*He who is free from attachment, fear or anger is called a sage of steady wisdom.*

*2.57 His wisdom is fixed on one who is everywhere without attachment,*

*Meeting with anything good or bad, and who neither rejoices nor hates.*

*2.58 As the tortoise withdraws its limbs from all sides, when a person withdraws his senses from the sense-objects,*

*His wisdom becomes steady.*

*2.59 From the body, the sense objects turn away, but the desires remain;*

*His desires also leave him on seeing the Supreme.*

Arjuna is now curious and wants to know more. He asks Krishna, 'You are telling me all this, that is wonderful. You tell me that I must perform without expectations and attachment and that I must be centered in wisdom. I would like to live that way and move on the path of wisdom. Pray, tell me what kind of a person is this, the one who is always in awareness in the present moment? How does he behave, walk and talk? Let me model myself on him.'

For the first time in this dialogue Arjuna expresses serious interest in what Krishna is saying. Arjuna has realised that whatever he said earlier had arisen from his confusion. Arjuna is intelligent enough to know that he does not know. When Krishna tells him to behave in a manner befitting the code of the warriors, this piece of advice certainly makes good sense to Arjuna, since this is the conditioning that he has been brought up in.

However, what Krishna says further confuses Arjuna. Krishna says to do what you have to do without being concerned about the outcome. This is a strange idea to Arjuna. He has rarely done anything in his life without first thinking about what is going to happen as a result of his action.

Arjuna is the greatest of marksmen. Once he fixes his bow on a target, he never misses. He is used to aiming at targets. He is conditioned to first define his target and then act. Krishna has confused him totally now. Krishna says, 'Release your arrow; where it lands is my business.' At least, this is how Arjuna understands what Krishna says.

Arjuna has enough trust in Krishna not to ignore this instruction from the Divine. So he asks, 'Tell me who is it who acts without any interest in the outcome? Who is it who is not concerned about the result, whether it is good or bad, painful or joyful, and how do I identify such a person?'

There is a branch of behavioral psychology called NLP or Neuro Linguistic Programming. In NLP, the basic idea is to model our activities based on those people we wish to emulate. If you talk, move, walk like Gandhi, you too can become like Gandhi, says NLP. There is some truth in this. When you immerse yourself in the mould of another person, imitate him completely, you start thinking like that person and become a lot like that person. Arjuna is asking Krishna for the specifications of the person he should emulate so that he too can become what Krishna wants him to become.

Krishna responds, 'This man is free from desires and emotions. He has neither greed nor fear. He is always centered in himself. Pleasures through the senses do not interest him. He has withdrawn his senses from the external world and has



focused them inwards, directed them towards that supreme Truth which is beyond all pleasures, attachments, emotions and sense objects. Once he realizes that truth, even the longing for that truth leaves him.'

Krishna thus describes the realized yogi to Arjuna so that he too may emulate him and realize himself. Once again Krishna teaches through simple steps.

*'Nirmohatve niscalatatvam,'* says Adi Shankaracharya, taking a cue from the master. It means: Absence of desires leads to a clear and still mind, steeped in wisdom. Dropping expectations, letting go of attachments, moving away from the regrets of the past and the fantasies of the future, if one brings the mind to the present, the mind stops and desires drop. When there are no desires, there are no emotions that normally arise from the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of such desires, such as joy, elation, depression, sadness, anger, disappointment, jealousy and so on.

When the mind is without fear and anger, without expectations of success and failure, the unattached mind seeks that which is unattached. It seeks the ultimate Truth, which is beyond all desires, emotions and attachment. The mind and the senses that the mind directs move away from the external objects of attraction to within. First the objects drop, then the desire for the objects disappears as truth dawns.

This may sound complicated, but is as simple as counting '1, 2, 3'.

This universe is responsible for all of us. We exist not because of ourselves and our actions but in spite of it. When we let go, when we listen to the universe, it gives us all that we need to live with abundance, but the problem is that we don't listen. We do not stop with our needs but get greedy with our wants as well. There is no way all our wants can be fulfilled without taking away the needs of other beings in this universe.

The law of the jungle operates beautifully without man. Animals act based on needs and not on wants. A lion kills because it has to eat, not because it sees another lion killing. It would kill only to appease its own hunger or when its own life is threatened. Once the human being enters the scene, this equation changes. Man engages in wanton killing, without caring about what he needs. Man no longer expresses his innate intelligence, unlike animals.

Once we choose to live based on our real needs, we focus on present needs and not futuristic wants. We rise into the present moment. Desires based on past and future dissolve. We start understanding our role in and our relationship with the

universe. We realize that we too are the universe and that we can have all that we need without desire, emotions, fear and greed, and most importantly without suffering.

Krishna aptly provides the example of the tortoise to illustrate how to withdraw one's senses inwards. The tortoise follows its instincts to obey nature; it lives in the present moment. It moves when its sensors report that there is no danger, and it withdraws completely when it senses threat. It lays its eggs, wading out of the sea onto the beach and moves back in when the hatching is done. Its entire cycle of life is tuned to the wisdom of nature. It is not an active and adventurous living being but it is celebrated in all ancient cultures for its longevity and steadiness. So Krishna gives the analogy of the tortoise withdrawing itself completely from the external world into its shell, to explain how man should withdraw from the dictates of the senses and be centered in his Self.

Man is obviously a different being from the rest of the animals. He alone of all living beings has the capability to think and act. He alone has the power to decide whether he follows the wisdom of nature inherent in him as in all other beings, or rejects it and decides to be 'unintelligent'. An animal, when it indulges in any act, whether of mating, caring, killing or saving its own life, does all and any of these with tremendous focus. When it mates, all it does is mate; it does not engage in conversation or watch television out of the corner of its eye. Its lust is all-fulfilling. It consumes its attention and therefore the energy of that moment. The animal always lives in its present moment. Not so the human. For the human, where his body is his mind never is.

Corporate people ask me how to make right decisions. It is simple. When you focus intensely on the job at hand and make a decision based on the information available at that moment, your decisions will always be right. The universal energy guides you in your decision when you settle into yourself, focus inwards and withdraw your senses as the tortoise does.

What do you all do instead? Half the time you postpone decisions because you are afraid of the consequences of the decision. So things happen without your control and which do not favor you. The other half of the time you are led by greed and prejudices based on past experiences and future fantasies and you decide with no relevance to issues of that moment.

Do you even eat properly? When have you last eaten, when can you say with your hand on your heart that you focused only on the food that you ate, instead

of chatting, reading, watching someone or something? When have you last done anything whatsoever with one hundred percent focus on what you did?

You may say that we are only human, we wish to enjoy life and we wish to enjoy sensual pleasures. Please do! However, when you enjoy, enjoy fully. Be fully focused on that object of enjoyment and with all your senses focused only on that activity.

When you do whatever you do with one hundred percent focus, you are in awareness. You become God!



## Trust Existence, Not Your Logic

*Q: Swamiji, you spoke about needs and wants, and that needs carry their own energy for fulfillment. Does this mean that we can do nothing and things will happen?*

When you have unconditional faith in the power of the universe, yes it will happen. Whatever you need you shall receive, without doubt. This is my experience.

When I left home at seventeen, I took a vow never to touch money again. All I had were the clothes on my body, the two-piece saffron cloth I was wearing, a water pot and a staff. With just these, I traveled the length and breadth of India for over six years and a distance of thousands of kilometers.

Not only did I not die, I became enlightened!

I am not the only one who achieved this. There are millions like me in India who choose to give up and surrender themselves to the energy of Existence. In other parts of the world, such people would be called homeless and would probably be hounded. They may be taken to the prison. In India, wandering monks are respected and given free food and shelter. No one says, 'Why are these able bodied people doing no work and begging for food?'

Honestly, I never begged for food. When I was really hungry, someone brought food from nowhere. I stayed under trees and out in the open, even in the Himalayan Mountains at 17,000 feet altitude, at Tapovan and such places. I had absolute trust in Nature. 'Whatever has to happen will happen' - such was my faith.

When you do not have that faith, of course it is a different story. I send some of my disciples on such trips, the monastic wandering, with no money. They too travel all over India and return with wonderful experiences. This is the only way you can understand how the world lives.

There is freedom in whatever you do. You are answerable only to yourself. Western societies are afraid of this. That is why they control such behavior. If too many people do that then society cannot control them. Society loses power and it can collapse.

In fact outside India, even religious institutions do not allow such freedom. I have not seen any wandering monks out on their own space like these *sanyāsis* - wandering monks of India.

It is bondage if one lives even as a monk in a place that is regulated. You can never be free within a disciplined environment.

That is why our ashrams are not regulated. Each person does what he or she can. No one is forced to do anything. It is a different matter that they perform far above their normal levels, but that is out of freedom and love, not out of greed and fear.

***Q: When Krishna advises Arjuna to withdraw his senses as a tortoise does, is He advocating the practice of pratyāhāra?***

Patanjali's concept of Ashtanga Yoga that includes the part of *pratyāhāra* or sense control is what Krishna refers to here.

*Pratyāhāra* literally means stopping the feeding of the senses. It does not mean removing the objects that the senses are attracted to, or getting frightened of the field of the senses or even shutting off the senses so that these objects cannot be sensed. No, that will never work.

If one's senses can be controlled by getting sense objects out of the way, all you need to do is go to the Himalayas and you will be enlightened! Moving out of the range of sense objects is a helpful condition but not the only and essential condition. There are thousands of *sanyāsis* out there in the mountains, forests and monasteries in seclusion, out of contact with women, who still have not dropped their fantasies of lust.

A young monk went up to his master and asked him how he could get rid of lustful thoughts that kept bothering him and disturbing his meditation.

When the novice finished, the older monk said, 'I am ninety and I still have lustful thoughts, plenty of them. Let us go to my master who is a hundred and twenty. He may perhaps have an answer!'

Shutting your eyes and ears is no solution either. You see people trying to meditate by shushing everyone around them and trying to concentrate. Meditation is not about becoming deaf and dumb. You can close your eyes and plug your ears to shut off all external signals. But then your inner movies will start playing; your inner television will start to play.

You may have heard about people who have had their limbs amputated but feel pain in the empty space where their limbs had been. They call this 'phantom pain'. You do not need the physical entity to feel pain; the nerve endings imagine that lost part and convey pain.

Blind people dream. They have dreams as vivid as any sighted person. With your eyes closed, you dream during the day as well as in the night. Shutting off a sense organ physically has no effect on the perceptions of that sense organ. It plays back from stored memories.

There is an energy behind your five sense organs, the *jñānendriya* that helps them perceive the world. What this energy reports to your body-mind system is interpreted by your unconscious mind based on your conditioning. You act based on that interpretation. Your actions further reinforce that conditioning, and the cycle continues.

The only way to stop this cycle is to disengage this energy. It does not help if you run away from the scene of action; the action will follow you through the fantasies of your mind. It does not help if you shut down your sense organs physically. Images stored within will still continue to play.

*Pratyāhāra* or starving the senses refers to starving or stopping the energy behind the sense organs, or stopping it from operating.

What Krishna implies is more. It is not merely stopping the energy; you will then be the walking dead; He does not want you to be a zombie. He wants your energy to be active, but *you* to be non-judgmental. He wants you to be free of all conditioning. He wants you to be freed from your *saṁskāras*.

When you can see and hear and touch and taste and smell everything around you without feeling aroused or repulsed, with no feeling of pain or pleasure, with no interest in the outcome, then you are free of *saṁskāras*. The energy behind your sense organs may function but your mind does not. You perceive but you do not interpret. You move with nature as your awareness dictates. You do what you need to do with awareness, with no interest in the outcome.



## Monkeys In Your Mind!

*2.60 O son of Kunti, the turbulent senses carry away the mind of a wise man,  
Though he is striving to be in control.*

*2.61 Having restrained them all, he should sit steadfast, intent on Me.  
Whose senses are under control, his mind is steady in the present.*

*2.62 When a man thinks of objects, it gives rise to attachment for them.  
From attachment, desire arises; from desire, anger is born.*

*2.63 From anger arises delusion, from delusion, loss of memory, from loss of  
memory, the loss of discrimination, from loss of discrimination, he perishes.*

*2.64 The self-controlled man, moving among objects with his senses under  
control, free from both attraction and repulsion, attains peace.*

*2.65 All pains are destroyed in that peace, for the intellect of the tranquil-  
minded soon becomes steady.*

*2.66 A person not in self awareness cannot be wise or happy or peaceful.  
How can there be happiness to one without peace?*

*2.67 He loses his awareness of the present moment when his mind follows the  
wandering senses,*

*Just as the wind carries away a boat on the waters.*

Krishna continues to explain to Arjuna how difficult it is to control the senses and what happens when one loses control of the senses.



It is like this: Once a monkey spotted a jar full of nuts. The jar was big and heavy with a long and narrow neck. The monkey put his hand into the jar and grabbed lots of nuts, but he was unable to withdraw his fist from the jar! He thought he was trapped with his hand in the jar!

He didn't realize that all he needed to do was to let go of the nuts, and he would be free.

This is the case with most of us. We all know very well how to kick off our senses into action by engaging them in gear and also accelerating into fantasies, but we have no idea how to slow down and stop the senses. We do not control our senses and the mind. Instead, our mind and senses control us.

Krishna says that our senses are turbulent, and however much we try to control them, they stay out of control. Some of the greatest sages, the *ṛṣis*, have been known to succumb to sensual pleasures. There is the legendary story of Vishwamitra, a great sage, who was seduced by the celestial maiden Menaka, in the midst of his intense penance.

Do you think the gods above have no other business than sending young women down to disturb people who meditate? In that case, I am sure that all men will start meditating from tonight without any compulsion from my side!

Nothing of that sort will happen, so don't start meditation for this reason. It was the suppressed fantasies of Vishwamitra's mind that took the shape of the celestial nymph. His senses were out of control. Hindu scriptures have referred to *brahmacarya* as a prerequisite to spiritual evolution and many misinterpret this to be celibacy. *Brahmacarya* is not merely celibacy; it is more than physical celibacy; it is living in reality without fantasies.

There are many people in the robes of monks and *sanyāsis*, trying to control their minds and trying to be celibate, and many of them fail because they cannot control their senses. Suppression does not work on the mind. Suppressed emotions explode when they get the chance. They just wait for the opportunity.

Krishna says that the only way is to focus one's mind on Him once the senses are under control and the mind is steady. The mind cannot be stopped. Thoughts cannot be stopped as long as the body exists. You can only focus your mind on something that transcends sensory pleasures and it will become quiet by itself. Once the mind discovers the bliss of this quietness, this solitude, it will never want to stray again. But remember, if you try to stop your thoughts you will only fail.

A small story:

A man who was intent on spiritual progress went to a master and begged him to teach him how to control his mind. The master tried to explain that the mind cannot be controlled in the manner he was seeking, by stopping his thoughts, but he wouldn't listen. Fed up, the master gave him a bottle of a liquid and told him to drink three drops three times a day.

The man asked, 'That's it? It will control my mind?'

The master said, 'Just one thing, make sure you don't think of a monkey when you drink the medicine.'

'Oh, sure, quite simple!' said the man as he walked out. At the door he turned and asked, 'By the way, in case I do think of a monkey, what should I do?'

'Take a shower,' said the master, 'and try again.'

As soon as the man went home, without wasting time, he took out the medicine and opened his mouth to drink it. Just then he remembered the master's warning - and remembered the monkey!

'Oh, my God!' he said to himself, 'Now I have to take a shower. What else to do!'

You can guess the rest of the story. Each time he opened his bottle of medicine, monkeys invaded his mind and all he did was keep taking showers.

It got to a point where as soon as he got out of the shower, thoughts of monkeys arose in his mind.

He ran to the master and pleaded, 'Forget the medicine. Just get rid of the monkeys, please!'

You can never destroy thoughts or suppress them. You can only witness thoughts and not get involved in them, and gradually the mind will settle down. When you settle into the present moment with no expectations and no attachments, you will find that your mind becomes quiet and your senses slow down.

Krishna says that from attachment springs desire, from desire arises anger, from anger arises delusion, from delusion comes loss of memory, and from loss of memory develops loss of discrimination which then leads to one's destruction. The

only way to stop this, the Lord says, is to control one's senses, center oneself in the present and surrender to Him, the universal energy, and achieve everlasting peace.

The map has been so clearly laid down by the greatest master of them all, not because He wants you to follow it, but because in His infinite grace and compassion He is making you aware of what is in store for you if you do. He teaches that if you do not control your senses, you will be destroyed.

Go through each of these stages laid down by the master. The path will be crystal clear. Each one of us develops attachment, liking, hatred and dislike for many things through our experiences. These likes and dislikes stay in our unconscious memory and even without any conscious awareness on our part drive us into actions through desires or into inaction through fears. When the desires are fulfilled, there is temporary satisfaction; then the desires grow. When the desires do not get fulfilled we are disappointed, we get angry.

We should be angry with our own selves for having had the desires or for not having worked wholeheartedly towards fulfilling the desire, but we actually get angry with other people who we think are responsible for our failures. Rarely do we admit that we are the cause of our failures. We normally say, 'Why admit our fault when there are literally millions out there who can carry it for us?' So we create fantasies and delusions about shifting responsibility and gradually erase the memory of our own responsibility for our actions.

The vicious cycle is now almost complete. The moment we fail to take responsibility for our actions, we lose all our powers of intellectual discrimination between right and wrong and resign ourselves to unawareness and unconscious behavior. This is a one-way road.

Observe a Hitler, a Mussolini, or any dictator, and you will note that their path to eventual destruction followed these lines. Lack of discrimination between right and wrong, because of imposed morality instead of conscious awareness, leads to self destruction and destruction of humanity. The vicious spiral that rapidly leads to such destruction of self and others arises always from desires for power, control, wealth, lust and other sensory pleasures which, when suppressed, lead through anger and delusion to this loss of discrimination.

Krishna reveals two very important truths here in the last two verses.

One is that you can never be peaceful unless you are aware and conscious. The other is that you cannot be aware if you are led by your senses.

Therefore, as long as your senses lead you into what you think is a pleasurable journey, you cannot really be happy or peaceful. It is just another trick your mind is playing on you.

There are many who come and ask me, '*Swamiji*, I am so happy just fantasizing. I fantasize about you. It is truly blissful. Yet you say not to do that. You ask me to drop your form. Why?'

Even fantasizing about me or fantasizing about your *iṣṭadevatā*, your favorite god, is not going to lead you to happiness. When you lose that form, you will be in depression.

Your happiness is not real happiness. It is just a gap between two periods of sorrow. All this happens when you fantasize about the master also. Imagine then, your plight when you fantasize about other material objects and desires that can only lead you into more greed.

Your senses are unreliable. What you hear, what you think you hear, what you see, what you think you see, and so on, all these sense inputs are unreliable. You only see and hear what you wish to see and hear, only what your mind, driven by that personal identity, ego, wants you to see and hear. Every single thing that you receive as your inputs through your senses is processed and colored by the filter of your mind and ego and you get to know only what they want you to know.

Your mind is constantly flitting between the future and the past in the form of thoughts; that is what thoughts really are, the journey of your mind between past and future and back, again and again.

This journey never stops all through your life unless you make a serious attempt to stop it. Your mind, on its own, would never want to stay in the present moment, which is the only moment of truth.

Your past is history. Your past is the dumping ground of all your regrets and guilt. There is no greater sin that you can commit than carrying these regrets and guilt. Committing an act labeled sinful by society and religion is less of a sin; carrying the guilt of having committed it is the real sin. That is what carries you into hell, even as you live in this world.

There is no hell in some afterlife. There is no Saint Peter or Yama (Lord of death) waiting at the Pearly Gates to consign you to hell. Those are stories woven into religion to control you through fear.

Do you think God has no other job except to chronicle each and every deed and thought you had in your life, mark them good and bad, give you marks and, like a schoolteacher, send you to suffer in hell because you had poor marks?

He has no time for all that! Hell for you is what you suffer in this life while living. You suffer with guilt, regret and remorse. You *live* in hell in this life, you don't *go* to hell after you die.

Or your mind dwells in the future, a future that does not exist. You speculate, you fantasize, you dream, you create stories and arguments, building a case for your future. If you are questioned, you would say, 'I need to plan.'

How much of what you plan is based on present reality? There is nothing wrong at all if you are grounded in reality and plan to progress in that reality. That is what I call chronological planning. Chronological planning is necessary if you live in the material world. I do it too. It is just for example, planning the day ahead, with what time you will wake up, what time you will leave your house, what time you will have the meeting at the office, what work you will complete during the day, what time you will return home etc. It is planning just once so that you know the target for the day. But most of the time what you do has nothing to do with reality.

You either worry about things that you have no control over and plan how to escape such worries, or desire things not in your reach out of sheer greed. Just think honestly and carefully.

Our senses aid us very ably in these worries and desires. They make us believe that all this is real and make us react to situations as if they are real. It is the same way that we get up from a nightmare sweating profusely out of fear. Although just a dream, it makes us sweat. In the same manner, these projections of our mind, even when we are fully awake, appear real to us.

Krishna says, 'Get away from your senses; escape from their control; ground yourself in the awareness of the present moment. Only then can you be at peace.'

What is this present moment? What is this awareness? When our mind is stopped from moving back and forth between the past and future, it will by itself land in the present moment. The present moment is what we are doing now. If you are reading this book, don't half read this book and half listen to music; don't half read this book and half watch television; don't half read this book and half talk with someone.

Either focus completely on what you are reading or don't read at all.

When did you really eat last? When I mean eat, I mean eat with full focus on the eating. When was the last time that you can remember each morsel that went into your mouth, without reading a book, watching television or talking to someone, without the food going into your mouth on auto pilot? If we treat food as junk, it turns into junk in our stomach. So instead of giving us the energy that it should, it makes us want to nap.

The next time you do anything, focus completely on what you are doing at that moment. If you are brushing your teeth, just focus on how the brush moves and how the paste tastes. Stop thinking about the meetings later at your office or getting your children ready for school, or whatever it is that you need to do a few minutes or hours later.

When you settle into the present moment, you are out of the clutches of your senses and mind. You will still see and hear, but none of what you see and hear will divert you from what you are focused on. You will be aware of only what you are doing in that present moment. This is what we call meditation. Meditation is nothing but being focused completely on what you are doing at a particular moment. This is what Buddha calls mindfulness.

This is what Krishna says will lead you into peace. When you are aware, your senses are in your control instead of you being under their control. You become peaceful, you are in bliss.



## All Desires Are Addictive!

*Q: Swamiji, you have said that the mind can never be stopped. Yet you speak of the no-mind state as the ideal. How can we reach the no-mind state if the mind cannot be stopped?*

As long as you are alive, your body-mind system is alive; by definition your mind is active. Your mind is nothing but the distributed intelligence of your system, the collection of your thoughts and memories. So long as you are alive, and your senses are active, you keep collecting data, storing and analyzing them and influencing yourself by all this.

You cannot stop this activity. If you try, you will be like the man who tried to stop thinking about monkeys. What you can do however, is decide not to follow the thoughts. You just witness the thoughts as if you are watching clouds in the sky. Do not get involved. This is possible. You then get out of the clutches of your mind. Instead of your mind controlling you, you can control your mind.

I ask participants in some of the programs to write down their thoughts for about 20 minutes, without editing. When they read what they wrote, they realised that what they have inside them is a madhouse! The thoughts are totally unconnected, illogical, random and meaningless.

Still worse, amongst all these random thoughts, you pick up a few thoughts at random and make pain shafts or pleasure shafts for yourself. All your problems arise as a result of your connecting thoughts in what *you* think is a logical manner.

The moment you unclutch from your thoughts and therefore stop making the shafts, it means that you accept and realize that your thoughts are unconnected. Then, you gain freedom and you reach the no-mind state.

This is the state that you should achieve in meditation. You should move into the present moment, being aware of what your thoughts are but without connecting with them, and becoming completely unclutched. You then become truly aware.

This is what is also referred to as the witnessing state. You are just a witness to your thoughts without becoming a part of them. You watch your thoughts without becoming involved in the activity. It is as if you are watching the clouds in the sky; you are seeing but you are separate from what you see. This is possible. All you need is some practice.

*Q: How can Krishna generalize saying that desire leads to destruction? The world cannot operate if we have no desires and if everybody only meditates!*

Well, for one thing, this world was in operation before you and other human beings came onto this planet; it will continue to operate even after all of us are gone. As Buddha says, this universe was always there and will always be there. This world and the universe are in operation not because of us but in spite of us!

We, the humans, are an insignificant part of the entire system. We are just a tiny bit of that energy; but we are so full of ourselves that we feel we help operate this world. That is the irony!

When you realize truly who you are and how you are part of that existential energy, you realize two things simultaneously. Firstly you realize how insignificant you are; that you are just a part of the whole; that you are not separated. At the same time, you also realize that you have immense potential; that you are Existence; and as part of the Whole, you are the Whole yourself.

This may seem contradictory at first, but this is the truth. You need to experience the truth to be able to express it. For the time being, please consider this to be the absolute truth whether you understand it or not, accept it or not, believe it nor not. It makes no difference to the universe what you think.

The route to destruction which Krishna warns us about is this: attachment, desire, anger, delusion, loss of memory, loss of discrimination and destruction. This is the vicious cycle.

There is a virtuous cycle that Shankara presents: getting together to learn the truth, nonattachment, freedom from delusion, equanimity of mind and liberation.



These are one and the same; one goes down, the other goes up. One takes you down to destruction; the other takes you into liberation.

When you take this body, when your spirit, Self, *ātman*, or soul enters the body, it does so out of desire. It does so out of unfulfilled desires that it carries from its previous life. The mindset that is the essence of these unfulfilled desires is called *vāsana* and the bundle of carried-over desires in the new body is called *prārabdha karma*. If you do not have this bundle of *karmas*, you will not be reborn; you will be liberated from the cycle of life and death.

This collection of unfulfilled desires that you are born with is energy. It is not something negative or something positive; it is pure energy. You come into this life with this energy that will fulfill itself, if you are aware of it. All you have to do is live life as it presents itself and accept what happens to you.

Unfortunately, during the process of death, in the causal layer of energy, one loses this awareness. As a result, we spend our lives collecting other people's desires as if they are our own. Most of our desires are borrowed through comparison, envy and greed. As such greed has no end.

It is this aspect of attachment and desire that Krishna is talking about. It is this bundle of desires that we borrow from others that Buddha says causes suffering. This is what Shankara says we must dissolve in our search for Truth and liberation.

The meaning of our lives is to be aware and fulfill all our carried-over desires so that there is nothing left unfulfilled. This fulfillment leads to *mokṣa*, liberation, Self-realization, whatever name you wish to give it. As a consequence you will not be reborn, unless you wish to be.

This is not an easy concept to explain in a book. We cover this extensively in our second level meditation program called Life Bliss Program Level 2, also known as Nithyananda Spurana Program. Simply put, when the undying spirit within us leaves the perishable body-mind system at the time of death, it passes through seven layers of energy. At each layer up to the final layer, it experiences and relives the memories of its life. Through the meditation techniques that we use with each layer, these memories called *samskāras* are dissolved.

For now, be clear that all the attachments and desires that you have, ultimately lead to grief and destruction, as Krishna says. You do not have the intelligence to stop at a point and say I have had enough. Even if a person is eighty he still wants to live. If he has grandchildren, he would like to live to see his great-

grandchildren. There is no end to desires, even though you know that you will die; even though you know that you will carry nothing with you when you die. Yet, you do not wish to die empty-handed. You wish to die with name and fame, with possessions, with a dynasty that will carry your name, and many such desires. What for?

Do you think you will remember any of this when you are born again? Or even if you do as a result of some malfunctioning of your brain circuitry, do you think you can do anything constructive with all these desires?

We are addicted. We are addicted not merely to what we think are addictive drugs, but we are addicted through attachment to many things in this world. When the attachment is positive we are attracted; when the attachment is negative we are repulsed. What attracts us at one time scares us at another. What attracts one repulses another. This is the delusion that Krishna talks about. We are not in touch with reality; we live in a fantasy world that we think is real.

Buddha says everything is impermanent, *aniccha*. When you understand this, when you understand that all the material possessions and relationships which attract and repulse you are all delusions, that they are impermanent, only then can you move towards the truth. Otherwise these delusions corrupt your mind and destroy you. You become rudderless in the vast ocean drifting towards destruction.

In His compassion, Krishna offers the solution as well. Restrain your senses, He says, and develop equanimity without like and dislike, without judgment of good or bad, without attachment to pain or joy. You will then attain peace and bliss. You will be in *nityānanda* - eternal bliss.



## Wake Up!

*2.68 O Mighty-armed, his knowledge is therefore steady whose senses are completely detached from sense objects.*

*2.69 The self-controlled man is awake in that which is night to all beings.*

*Where all beings are awake, it is night for the sage who sees.*

*2.70 Just as all waters enter the ocean, he attains peace into whom all desires enter, which when filled from all sides, remains unmoved; not the desirer of desires.*

*2.71 The man who moves about abandoning all desires, without longing,*

*Without the sense of I and mine, attains peace.*

*2.72 O Partha, this is the state of Brahman; none is deluded after attaining this.*

*Even at the end of life, one attains oneness with **Brahman** when established in this state.*

In His concluding words in this chapter, Krishna clarifies to Arjuna once again, how to reach liberation, how to become one with *Brahman* which is one's true and natural state.

We have seen that a person not centered in self-awareness cannot be peaceful or happy or wise. A person who is led by his senses cannot be self-aware and be in the present. A person who is in control of his senses is firmly in control of his mind. He does not let his senses and mind control him. Only such a person is truly awake.

We all think we are awake; are we really? We live in dreams even if we are awake. The only difference is that we are not asleep in a physical sense. So we pretend that we are awake, that we are intelligent, that we are thinking and that we are making the right decisions.

How then do we wake up? It is said that in King Janaka's kingdom a town crier used to go around shouting, 'wake up, wake up' much after sunrise, to remind people that they should be awake and aware!

The only occasion when we are truly awake is when we are in the present moment, when we are truly aware of what we are doing at that point in time.

A person in such awareness is whom Krishna calls a '*muni*', a realized being living in the present. Such a person is always awake, whether physically awake or asleep.

Krishna says that such a person is in sleep when others are awake. The realized person, although he may appear to be living and actively participating in the activities of the same world that we live in, is in reality, in a state of passive alertness. This means that his senses are not immersed in worldliness and he is centered in his Self. He is dead and asleep to this world because he has moved beyond his senses.

A truly realized person is also awake when others are asleep. Even in his sleep he is aware, in what is called the state of *supta chittam*. We can experience four states of mind - wakefulness, dream, deep sleep and the state of Self-awareness.

When we are awake, we are aware of the 'I' and 'mine' and are ruled by our mind, senses and thoughts. We are controlled by our delusion, *māyā*. *Māyā* arises from our identification with the 'I' and 'mine'.

However, a person who is in the present moment is still as the waters in the bed of the ocean. Though there are waves in the surface, they do not disturb the bed of the ocean. Even when desires assail him, they are mere waves in the periphery of his consciousness, and do not disturb him at all. He has abandoned all attachment to 'I' and 'mine'. He is without thoughts and desires and when thoughts and desires come to him, they merge into him without disturbing him.

You may ask how this is possible.

The '*muni*', one who is still, in silence, is one who is in total control of his senses. When the senses are controlled, when the ego is out of action, all thoughts

and desires are just witnessed. The '*munī*' does not get involved in these thoughts and desires. He does not even try to stop or suppress them, as he knows it is impossible. He just lets them be. He just watches them go past, just like the ocean watches impassively as other waters merge into it.

We are all enlightened because we are all a holographic part of the reality of the universe, *Brahman*. All that we lack is the awareness of the truth of our enlightenment. There is no path to enlightenment because we already are enlightened.

All that is needed is the awareness of our enlightened state.

What prevents you from realizing that you are enlightened is your ego. This ego is not necessarily about any arrogance. It is the perception of who you think you are; it is the collection of thoughts, experiences and emotions that go to make up that 'I' and 'mine'. This identity is that of the body and mind, not of your spirit. Therefore, it perishes with your body and is transient. This identity with the transient reality of who you think you are and what 'yours' is, is *māyā*.

*Māyā* is the illusion that creates a barrier between you and your awareness of your enlightened state.

A person who is in control of his senses, his mind and thoughts, lives in the present moment, in full awareness of his true nature and is one with *Brahman*. He is the only one who is truly awake, not the rest of us who think we are awake. We are all still in deep sleep. Such a person who is self-aware is fully awake even when he is asleep.

People with a strong consciousness of 'I' live out of their blocked *mūlādhāra cakra*, the root energy center. They are at the very beginning of their spiritual evolution. Their main concerns will be about their own survival and the survival of their species, and they are caught in lust, anger and greed. These are the qualities that the 'I' evokes in you.

The person with a strong attachment to 'mine,' the possessions belonging to the 'I', constantly lives in fear of losing these possessions. Such people live out of their blocked *svādiṣṭhāna* or spleen *cakra* - the energy center that gets locked due to fear. They live in insecurity of losing possessions, of losing identity, and finally, of death.

Energization of the *mūlādhāra* and *svādiṣṭhāna cakra* and moving the energy up through the *anāhata* or heart *cakra* to the *ājñā* or third eye *cakra* (the energy center between the eyebrows which is the seat of intelligence) opens up people to the

reality of looking at others and the rest of the universe as themselves and finally dropping the ego - one's identification with 'I' and 'mine'.

Then, true surrender to the universe and identification with one's true nature occurs, and enlightenment happens. You then do become God!

Krishna completes his description of the person established in yoga whose profile Arjuna has asked for. Krishna concludes by saying that a person steeped in yoga is centered in reality and is one with *Brahman*. He says that this person is liberated even if he were to reach that state at the end of his life.

Krishna is in the process of showing Arjuna what he truly is and how he can realize that truth. Control over the senses, resting in the state of mindful awareness instead of letting the senses control you, surrendering to the universe instead of fighting the universe, dropping one's mind and identity and staying in the awareness of the present moment are the surest ways to realize the truth, the truth that you indeed are God.

I tell my disciples time and again, 'I am not here to prove my divinity. I am here to prove *your* divinity.'

This is the timeless message of Krishna. This is the message of Bhagavad Gita.

Arjuna's confusion is slowly reducing. Actually it is good to be confused. It is much better to accept that one is confused than to live in the delusion that one knows everything. Arjuna had the courage to come out and tell Krishna his fears and doubts. This is the first step towards clarity. How long it takes for that clarity to emerge doesn't matter. One is on the path and that is what matters.

In this second chapter of Gita on *Sāṅkhya Yoga* or Transcendental Knowledge as it is commonly translated, Krishna sets Arjuna on the path of recovery. May all of you travel that path too!

Let us pray to the ultimate Existence, *Parabrahma* Krishna, to give us all the experience of eternal bliss, *nityānanda*. Thank you!



## Drop Your Ego!

**Q:** Swamiji, when you say that we should live without ego, is it really possible to do that when we live in the material world? Wouldn't we then become failures materially?

Ego, as I have used the term here, has two aspects. In Sanskrit, we call these *ahankāra* and *mamakāra*.

*Ahankāra* is ego projected outwards. It is about what you convey to others about who you are. This is always more than what you are. You would like people to think that you are more handsome, smarter, richer and in all ways better than what you really are.

*Mamakāra* is what you think about yourself within you. It is always less than what you really are. People say to me, 'No Swamiji, I have a very high self-esteem.' Remember, as long as you do not realize that you are God, your self-esteem is low!

The gap between *ahankāra* and *mamakāra* is what causes trouble. You like to project something that you do not think you are. You may term this differential ego. This is the differential you need to drop.

When you are the same while looking inwards and projecting outwards, there is no problem. You are quite natural. You are the real self. You do not need to boast, you do not need to hide.

If you reach this state, you will in fact do far better materially, because people will have far greater respect for you. You will be doing what you promise and promise what you can deliver. There will be no differential.

Of course, in a deeper sense, as you progress spiritually, you may drop all attachment to your self, your body-mind system. This does not mean that you

cannot function in the material world. Many masters have functioned in such a state. In such a state, one's identification is not with this material body-mind system at all, but with the Existential energy. Then, your *ahankāra* and *mamakāra* are harmonized, at the highest possible level of divinity.

**Q: Swamiji, you described four states of mind. How does one distinguish between the state of deep sleep, *susupti*, and the mindless state of awareness, *turiya*, the fourth state?**

We have a combination of thoughts and identity to give us four states of the mind.

When we have thoughts in our mind, and we are aware of our identity, we are physically awake. This is the first state, the state in which you are listening to me

Various States of Consciousness		
	With Thoughts	Without Thoughts
With "I" Consciousness	<b>Jagrat</b> <b>Wakeful State</b> Thinking	<b>Turiya</b> <b>Blissful State</b> State of Full Awareness
Without "I" Consciousness	<b>Swapna</b> <b>Dream State</b> Dreaming	<b>Sushupti</b> <b>Unconscious State</b> Deep Sleep

now. When we are unaware of our identity but still have thoughts, we are dreaming. This is the second state. While dreaming, there is no 'I' identity right? This is why we are startled into wakefulness when a nightmare seems to threaten our life, our identity.

Third, when we are in deep sleep, we have neither thoughts nor a sense of our identity. For all practical purposes we are dead. The body-mind system is refreshing itself by dying and being reborn every night and day.



The fourth state, called by some the Fourth Way, is the state where we are fully aware but have no thoughts! At least there is no attachment to thoughts, no linking of thoughts. It is only witnessing. This is the state called *samādhi*. *Samādhi* means returning to one's natural state, or simply put, the realization of Self.

Enlightened beings are in the *samādhi* state all the time. This does not mean that they are withdrawn with eyes closed continuously, not at all. As Krishna says, they are awake when others are asleep and asleep when others are awake. This means that they are always in awareness and that their senses are controlled or asleep.

Let me give you a simple tip to evaluate how evolved a person is. Watch that person when he is asleep, when he is in really deep sleep and he does not know you are watching. If that person is like a flower when asleep, totally blissful, with no movements and no facial changes, that person is in *turiya* or *samādhi* state. The body is asleep but the mind, while without thoughts, is fully aware. The body-mind is at rest and in bliss, *nityānanda*.

Thank you.

*Thus ends the second chapter named **Sāṅkhya Yogaḥ** of the Upaniṣad of Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of yoga dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.*

# BhagavadGita

## Beauty of Purposelessness

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### CHAPTER 3

Life is to enjoy living, not to chase goals. There is no real purpose to life; life in fact is purposeless. Once we create goals to reach, we create sorrow to follow.



- ◆ *Swamiji*, you say that skepticism is a big hindrance to learning. But you also urge us to voice our doubts. Why?
- ◆ If we are to drop the memories of what happened in the past as the master indicates to his disciple, won't there be more problems? People do learn from their past, from their past mistakes. If they drop their impressions of the past, they will suffer. Wouldn't they?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, is it possible that meditation can take us into inaction? Even though my intention is to energize myself through meditation, I find I lose interest in things after meditation. Why?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, what is suffering? Why do we suffer? Is suffering essential?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, whenever I am in your presence, all questions disappear and everything seems possible. But when I am away from you, all the familiar doubts creep in. Why does this happen and what can I do about it?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, in India we are brought up to follow rituals and idol worship. Are you for or against these?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, can you explain the concept of *karma*?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, when a relationship is not working out, when should we persevere and when should we abandon it and get on with our lives?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you ask us not to suppress our natural passions. But is it right to indulge these passions?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you tell us to 'give our all' in love. But what if the love is not appreciated or returned?



## Beauty of Purposelessness

The whole of Existence, the whole universe, is purposeless.

Of course, it would be very shocking to hear this. From a very young age, we are taught and socially conditioned to believe that life has got some purpose. We are always made to run towards some goal, towards some purpose.

‘What is life without purpose?’ you may ask. You may wonder, ‘How can this statement have any meaning?’ We feel that any activity, let alone one’s entire life, has to have a purpose, a definition, and an end point. Only then does it become meaningful. That purpose is what drives us, motivates us and adds spice to our day-to-day activities.

‘You are confusing,’ you would say. ‘All our life we have been brought up to believe that we are here for a purpose. As children we are expected to do well at school, and later at college. Once we grow up, we are supposed to get married and bring up our children. In each phase of our life, we have specific templates, specific guidelines that society and our family has set up for us. How can we let them down? How can we believe that all these expectations are wrong, and that there is no purpose to life?’

You would say, ‘You are turning our life upside down!’

The more you run towards a goal, the more you are considered a successful person. The greater the speed, the more you are respected. The greater the speed, the more the rewards. From birth, again and again, you are taught, society teaches you, that life has a purpose and a goal. Life without purpose seems meaningless to us. We cannot even comprehend such a possibility.

Understand that this is only what you have been brought up to believe. This is not the truth of Existence. Life does not need a defined goal to make living

worthwhile, meaningful and happy. The absence of purpose makes our life meaningful. The absence of goals in life makes living worthwhile.

The universe, nature, has no purpose. It just is. It exists. A river runs downhill towards the ocean because it is its nature to run downhill. It is not because it has a purpose, to meet the ocean. Our life too, has no purpose. We were not born for a purpose. We were born to live, to enjoy life and to be happy. Instead, we set ourselves up for unhappiness; we set goals for ourselves, and almost always these goals are based on fantasies and not on realities. In the process, we stop enjoying life.

The more you run towards the goal, the more you miss life itself!

A person who is continuously bothered about goals will never be able to enjoy his life. He lives in the future and ignores the present. When we are in the present moment, the here and now, we do not need a goal to guide us.

Just the awareness of the present moment will help us decide what needs to be done at each point in time. When the present moment is taken care of with awareness, the future gets resolved on its own. As long as the path is right, whatever destination we reach will be right. We do not need to define the destination; the right path defines its own destination.

However, we constantly worry about the future. We constantly think of the past, relate it to the future and define our expectations based on what we have missed in the past, or what we believe will provide us happiness in the future.

For example, when you are studying you think, 'When I get a job, I will be happy.' When you have your job you think, 'After marriage my life will be happy.' After marriage, you think, 'When I have kids and my own house, I will be happy.' After you have kids and your own house you think, 'When the kids grow up and all my responsibilities are over, I will be happy.' By the time your kids are settled, by the time your responsibilities are over, when you want to relax, your being is so conditioned to running that you can't relax!

With this mental attitude, we are constantly running to stay in the same spot. Happiness is where we are. It is not where we think we should be.

A small story:

A very successful investment banker from New York was getting burnt-out. He had been earning millions since his youth by constantly running after goals

and targets. Seeing him getting burnt-out, his friends advised him to take a break.

Knowing that the word 'relaxation' was not in his dictionary, they advised him to go to a distant rural spot well-known for fishing. They told him that fishing was very good for health so he could come back more energetic.

The man agreed and he went out and bought designer gear - clothes, shoes, hat, and of course, the most expensive fishing gear, including a designer bait. He took a flight to the nearest city and then drove down the village. He booked himself in the most comfortable place to stay.

Early next morning, he got dressed, and with all his gear went to the fishing spot. He sat under a shady tree, made himself comfortable and put his fishing line into the water and waited. He waited and waited. An hour passed. There was no sign of any fish being caught. He was getting impatient but he could not accept that he was not successful at something as simple as fishing when he could handle such complex businesses.

Just then, an old man who was living there, dressed in crumpled shorts and a simple shirt, came by and sat a few meters downstream from him.

The banker watched this old man with amusement, wondering what fish this old man intended to catch! The old man had a fishing rod, which was nothing but a long and sturdy twig, and a can of worms for baiting the fish. He settled down and put his fishing rod into the stream.

Within minutes, the old man was catching fish; not just one, but one after another. Without hesitation, the old man was throwing the fish back into the water and laughing. He was thoroughly enjoying himself.

Suddenly, the old man became aware of the young banker staring at him. He turned to him with a broad smile and greeted him, 'Hi,' he said, 'Why don't you shift over here? This is a better place to catch them.'

The young banker quickly moved next to the old man who guided him as to where to cast his rod. Soon, the young banker was also catching fish. He was very excited.

The banker was a typical businessman. His business mind started to race. He said to the old man, 'You are so brilliant at what you do. You should come to New York. I can introduce you to rich people whom you can teach and you can make a lot of money.'

The old man listened attentively to the banker. He then asked the banker, 'Are you rich?' The banker said, 'Yes, sir. I earn a lot of money.'

The old man asked, 'What do you plan to do now, now that you have a lot of money?' The banker replied, 'I am married to a lovely lady and hope to have a couple of children.'

The old man continued, 'Then?' The banker said, 'Oh, we shall build a lovely house.'

The old man asked, 'Then?' The banker said, 'We shall take vacations. Whenever I need a break from work, I shall come here and fish.'

The old man simply said, 'But that is exactly what I am doing now!'

Most of us need to get stressed out before we can relax. We do not understand what it is to relax. When I tell people to relax during meditation, they ask me, '*Swamiji*, please give us detailed guidelines how to relax!' We feel we need to lose our happiness before we can start searching for it.

The tension of running behind something has become a part of our being. It has become part of our conditioning. After that, resting will not be rest anymore. It will not be relaxation anymore. It will be a state of restlessness!

When we run behind goals, all that seems to matter is the achievement of that goal. Any sacrifice seems to be worth it. We don't even feel connected to people around us when we run behind our goal, even those who we claim we love and care for.

When we decide to rest at the end of our lives, we will feel lonely because we have been conditioned to run after something. We have been conditioned to associate ourselves with some activity or the other all our life.

The more you run, the more titles you receive. You are called a 'multi-dimensional personality'. I tell you, this is just another name for schizophrenics.

Only a person who has deeply experienced himself, who rests in himself, who experiences inaction in action, only such a person can be a multidimensional personality. Only such a person understands himself and his many personalities, and is comfortable with all of them.

Only a Krishna can be a multidimensional personality. Only a man who completely rests in himself, who knows how to relax within himself, can be a multidimensional personality.

A person who runs to satisfy society, who is made to run by society, can never experience peace. Be very clear - the more you run, the greater is the possibility of you going mad. But society wants you to run. Only then will you be useful to it.

Society doesn't want you as you are. It wants you as it thinks you should be. It wants you as a useful member of society. If you are a doctor, if you are a lawyer, if you are an accountant, if you are useful to society in some way, then you are rewarded, you are praised. That is why society gives so much importance to your title. It makes you feel inadequate if you don't work for such titles.

You are respected just based on your title, not for what you are. The more titles you have, the more respect you get. The fewer the titles you have, the lesser the respect. The more useful you are to society, the more you are respected.

Please understand: Life is purposeless. Look into your life deeply. Whatever you think of as the goal of your life, even if it were fulfilled, do you think you will be able to rest? Do you think you will feel fulfilled? No! You will only look for the next goal.

As each goal is fulfilled, another springs up in its place. There is no resting point. There is not even time to appreciate what you have achieved, to enjoy your achievement and acquisitions. You are driven from one goal to another, from one desire to another. In the process, there is no fulfillment. There is always a feeling of discontentment. You run not because your being wants to, but because society drives you.

A person came to me and said, 'Earlier I used to smoke and drink. My wife used to fight with me all the time. She always blamed me whenever things went wrong. She would connect anything and everything to my smoking and drinking and blame me. If the kids did not study well, she would say, 'You are a drunkard. You don't care for your kids. That is why they are not studying well.' If something went wrong in the house, again she would find some way of connecting it with my smoking and drinking. I was continuously blamed this way. I was totally disturbed. So finally, somehow, I gave up smoking and drinking.'

I asked, 'Oh! Is she happy now?'

He said, 'No! Now she is unhappy that she is not able to complain about anything anymore!'

When you have something or someone to blame, you can always put the responsibility on them and feel comfortable. You can feel relaxed. When you can't put the responsibility on someone else, you suffer.



It is easy to escape reality by putting the responsibility on someone else. When we can't handle reality, we look for convenient excuses to hide. Here, Arjuna is doing the same thing by asking Krishna this question in the third chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna is shifting responsibility away from him.

*Q: Swamiji, you say that skepticism is a big hindrance to learning. But you also urge us to voice our doubts. Why?*

You can raise questions due to either skepticism or doubt. But there is a world of difference between the two.

Skepticism is a state where one refuses to believe in anything at all, just like that! The skeptic will raise arguments just for the sake of raising them. In this sense, skepticism itself is an unconscious belief; it is a foregone negative conclusion against anything and everything.

The skeptic has no opinions and no ideology of his own. He only has an argument against whatever idea you place before him. He will argue against an idea for hours, and if you present another idea that is just the opposite, he will argue against that also, equally emphatically!

Actually, he has already settled into a permanent attitude of 'no' towards everything. In this sense, skepticism marks the end of the journey for the learner, because with this attitude it is impossible to get anywhere. The skeptic has closed himself to all possibility of change.

Skepticism arises from inner violence. It surfaces as questions that require no answers, since each answer will automatically be followed by another question. In fact, the questioner will not even be listening to the answer to his questions. He would have already assumed that whatever the answer may be, it will not be the right answer for him!

This is why, when I answer questions, I always say that I do not answer the question but the questioner.

Doubt, on the other hand, is a state of openness and receptivity. Doubt is an acceptance of 'I don't know, but I can learn'. This marks the beginning of the learner's pilgrimage. Doubt is the path of the seeker; it simply seeks to eliminate all that is untrue in order to perceive the Truth.

A man with doubt listens with respect, not with defiance. He possesses the humility of the ignorant. His is the attitude of YES. He is only waiting to experience so that he can trust.

Doubts seek the truth. Doubts arise out of faith.

When a person of sharp intellect turns to skepticism, it is a dangerous sign because it can be very ego-fulfilling to put down all ideas in an effective manner. But ultimately, the skeptic is only burning his own bridges.

Especially with a master, if you adopt the attitude of skepticism, there is just no way He can get through to you. There is no point in going to a doctor just to question the value of every pill in his prescription, is there?

So ask your questions, by all means. But just watch the attitude with which you ask them!



## To Act Or Not To Act Is The Question

*3.1 Arjuna said:*

*O Janardana, O Kesava, Why do You make me engage in this terrible war  
If You think that knowledge is superior to action?*

*3.2 My intelligence is confused by Your conflicting words.*

*Tell me clearly what is best for me.*

*3.3 The Lord said,*

*'O sinless Arjuna, as I said before, in this world there are two paths;*

*Self-knowledge for the intellectual, and the Path of Action for the yogi.*

*3.4 A person does not attain freedom from action by abstaining from work,*

*Nor does he attain fulfillment by giving up action.*

In the previous chapter, the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna that knowledge of the Self is the supreme path to enlightenment. Krishna explains to Arjuna about the nature of the indestructible Self. 'It cannot be cleaved by weapons nor burnt by fire nor dried by the wind nor wetted by water,' says Krishna. The Self is untouched and untouchable.

Krishna explains to Arjuna that those whom Arjuna thinks he is about to slay have already been slain, and that it is the nature of the perishable body to be destroyed; the indestructible spirit moves on. This spirit takes on a new body just as one changes a worn-out garment for a new one. Krishna tells Arjuna to shed all fears and desires, and to focus on the reality of the Self.

A few days ago, a young man came to me and asked, '*Swamiji*, should I marry as per my wish or should I listen to my father in this regard?'

I said, 'Listen to your father's words and go for an arranged marriage.'

He asked, 'Why master? Won't I be happy if I marry as per my wish?'

I told him, 'If you have enough courage to take the blame yourself for anything that happens later, go in for love marriage. Otherwise, with an arranged marriage, at least you will have somebody you can blame for anything that happens!'

If you marry as per your wish, you can't blame anybody if such a situation arises! If you go for an arranged marriage, after two to three years, even if things don't work out well, you can always put the blame on someone else. I am not advocating this mode of behaviour. I am only telling what is happening in today's world. Generally, with your own decision you can't blame anybody. But if you decide to follow others, even though the decision to follow them is your own decision, you can somehow put the blame on that person and escape. They will not tell you that it was your own decision to follow them.

Arjuna is still very much in this mode. He is confused as to what he should do. At one level, he understands what Krishna says to him. However, the explanation about the spirit living on while the body dies, and the idea that all those he is about to fight and destroy have already been destroyed in the cosmic sense, does not appeal to him. Arjuna is a warrior. To him, what is seen in front of him is what exists. He sees all his elders and relatives arrayed against him in battle and he has to make a choice to kill or be killed. This is the physical reality that he faces.

On the other hand, Krishna tells him not to take this reality seriously. Krishna says that all the living people in front of him are already dead, and therefore he is committing no sin by killing them again. In fact, if he does not fight them, he incurs the calumny of having run away from battle as a coward.

Krishna advises Arjuna to control his senses and shed his desires. One who controls all his senses is like the ocean in which all rivers are consummated. Krishna advises Arjuna that from anger arises delusion; from delusion, loss of memory; from loss of memory, the destruction of discrimination; and from destruction of discrimination, one perishes.

Krishna also tells Arjuna that he has the right only to do his duty, but no right to its results. 'Let not the fruit of action be your motive and let not your attachment be to inaction either,' Krishna warns him.

Arjuna is totally confused.

He asks Krishna, 'I do not understand what you are saying. First, you tell me to fight. Then you tell me to shed anger. You say I must kill my enemies, who are my elders and relatives, but then you say I should not worry about the end result.' Arjuna says, 'All I need to know is whether I should act or not. You say that knowledge is superior to action, and yet, you say I must act. What should I do?' he asks simply.

What Arjuna leaves unsaid is, 'What use is knowledge if it cannot be used in action?' Arjuna is a *kṣatriya*, a warrior, not a *brāhmin*, a scholar or a philosopher. Philosophers can keep arguing for both sides of an issue, without bothering about any logic. Philosophers are only interested in advertising their so-called knowledge. But warriors are men of action. They have no time to waste in idle talk.

So Arjuna says, 'Cut out all this superficiality; tell me the truth as it is. Tell me what I should do.' To Arjuna, these words are superficiality!

True to his conditioning, Arjuna is uncomfortable when he is not doing something in action; when he has no clearly defined purpose before him.

Your whole life is purposeless, but again and again, you are conditioned to run towards something - whether it is in material life or spiritual life. Some goal is always put in front of you. The so-called goals in material life or spiritual life, both continuously make you feel that you are not good enough.

Just understand, whatever you think of as your purpose in life, whether it is money or relationships or name and fame, even if you have complete fulfillment in that dimension, you will not rest!

By the time you reach the top, climbing will become your habit. When climbing becomes your habit, you can't rest within yourself. Please be very clear, once climbing or running becomes your lifestyle, you will be running even if you don't know *why* you are running.

Someone told me this, I believe a management consultant said it, 'If you place a ladder somewhere and climb as fast as you can, you will quickly reach the top of the ladder. But unless the ladder is placed where you want, where you reach will be of no consequence!' Climbing as fast as you can is *efficiency*. We all think we are very efficient. Placing the ladder where you want is *effectiveness*. Not all of us know where to place the ladder. So, the consultant says to focus on where to place the ladder.

But I say even he is mistaken.

It does not matter where you place the ladder, as long as you enjoy the climb!

The trouble is that we spend the entire climb obsessed about where we will reach and what we will do there. If we spend that time enjoying the journey, any destination we reach will be the right destination. The destination is not important; the journey is. The goal is not important; the process is.

A small story:

A man met his friend on the street. His friend looked very sad and was nearly in tears. So he asked him, 'What happened? Why do you look so sad?'

His friend replied, 'Three weeks ago, my uncle died and left me fifty thousand dollars.'

The man replied, 'That's not bad...'

His friend said, 'Wait till you hear the rest. Two weeks ago, my cousin died and left me ninety-five thousand dollars.'

The man exclaimed, 'Hey, that's great!'

His friend said, 'Last week, my grandfather passed away. I inherited almost a million.'

Now this man became really curious. He asked, 'Then why are you so sad?'

His friend replied, 'This week - nothing!'

Exactly the same thing happens in our lives! We are always greedy for more. We continuously pursue material goals. As a result, we never relax within ourselves. That is the reason why even in old age, when we want to relax, we are unable to relax.

Have you seen a single man above seventy relaxing? Never! At the most he will be sitting with the television. People can never sit with themselves! If they have company, they will start talking about their golden past. If they don't have company, they will be sitting and watching television, or they will be reading the same old newspaper, from the first line to the last with a big magnifying glass! They just can't sit with themselves.

I have seen many elderly people in India - their sons would be married, daughters would be married, grandchildren also would be married! But they will be sitting and reading the matrimonial column in the newspaper! They will be sitting

and reading the classified ads for brides and grooms, not for any purpose, but because they can't sit with themselves.

A man who can't sit with himself misses one of the major dimensions of his being. Continuously running, thinking that there is some purpose to life, his whole being will be in a state of tension, conditioned to running.

Ego is nothing but this social conditioning which gives you the idea that there is some purpose to life. Life has no purpose. Even if you achieve whatever you want, you can't take it with you. You can't carry even a single dollar when you leave. Nothing will come with you.

There is no exchange offer, please be very clear about this. If you give forty rupees in India, you will get one dollar in the USA. But no matter how much money you give in this world, you cannot have a single rupee in heaven. There is no exchange counter or exchange offer.

A small story:

A millionaire was on his deathbed. He distributed his property among his three sons and told them, 'Each of you should put a million rupees in my coffin when I die. Please put a million rupees each with my body and bury me.'

All three agreed, 'Yes, we will do so, father.' One was an accountant, another one was a doctor, and the third one was a lawyer. After the father's death, the first son said, 'I should be honest. Father has given me so much property.' Saying so, he put a million rupees in cash in the coffin.

The second son came and said, 'I should also be honest. Let me put my share.' He put his share of one million rupees cash into the coffin.

The third son came. He just put in a cheque for three million rupees and took back the two million rupees his brothers had put in and said, 'I am paying for all three of us. Let him encash this cheque and spend it!'

You can't carry anything. No cheque will be useful. None of your money can be carried over to the next world.

As of now, this whole world, this material world, appears four-dimensional and multi-colored as you enjoy it with all your senses. The moment you leave the body, the same world will appear black and white, uni-dimensional, flat and uninteresting. For example, as of now, the dream which you had last night, looks black and white and this world looks real. However, while you were dreaming, the dream looked exactly like reality, in colour, is it not?

Please be very clear, when you are dreaming, your dream looks very real. When you are awake, this world around you looks like reality and the dream looks dull and in black and white. But there is no scale to measure which is reality and which is a dream.

A small story:

A great Zen master comes out of his bedroom one morning and suddenly starts weeping.

His disciples ask him, 'What is this, master? You are an enlightened man. How can you weep? Why are you weeping? What happened?'

He says, 'Last night I dreamt that I was a butterfly.'

The disciples laugh and say, 'What is the problem? It was only a dream. Why do you bother? Forget about it.'

The master says, 'No, no! Now I have a big problem. I don't know whether I am a Zen master who dreamt that he became a butterfly or whether I am a butterfly is who is now dreaming that it has become a Zen master!'

Please be very clear, there is no scale to measure reality and dream. There is no scale to prove whether the dream is reality, or what you think as reality is really the reality. We don't know!

As of now, the material world looks like a 4D, four-dimensional one. 3D movies are no longer the ultimate; now there are 4D movies. When I visited the Universal Studios, they were screening a film called Shrek in 4D. While watching some scenes, not only do you see it in 3D with the spectacles provided, but your chair is also rocked and water sprinkled on you to give some real special effects! You really feel that the movie is happening around you; you really feel you are undergoing the experience. That is what 4D is.

Now, when you are here, this world appears in 4D and dreams are in black and white. But when you enter into the dream, the dream looks like 4D.

Please be very clear, we don't know which is true, which is reality. Right now you may be dreaming that you are sitting in a temple and listening to the Gita! We don't know! There is no scale with which we can measure dream or reality.

People tell me, 'But everyday when we enter into the dream, we are not entering into the same dream Swamiji. On the other hand, everyday when we



return to reality we are entering into the same reality. So with this scale we can say which is reality and which is a dream.'

Please be very clear, in one night's dream you can live even 20 years of life, am I right? Don't you sometimes have such dreams where in one night's dream you live 20 years of life? In that 20-year span, you are in the same consistent dream, is it not? Then why can't your dream be reality, because of its consistency?

Be very clear, this whole life, this whole time span, which you think is reality, may be part of one dream! So be very clear, there is no scale to prove which is reality and which is a dream. When you leave the body, all that you see now as multi-colour, will become black and white.

As I stated earlier, nothing can be carried with you at the time of leaving the body. You can't encash your cheques! You can't talk to your relatives. If you speak, they will run away! Your car will not be useful to you anymore. When you are not able to take anything with you, what is the purpose of life then?

What is the purpose of life? The moment you understand that life is purposeless, the moment you accept the beauty of purposelessness, you will realize the meaning of living.

Life has no purpose, but it has meaning to it.

Purpose means goal orientation. You always think about the goal; running, running, running and suddenly one day you just drop dead! The more goal-oriented you are, the more you will miss life.

Purpose is different from meaning. When I say the word 'meaning', living itself becomes meaningful. Come to this present moment and the path itself is life; the path itself is meaningful.

There is no such thing as, 'in the end you will be happy'. You always postpone joy; you always postpone bliss and so you always postpone living. Life is lived in a very superficial way because you think life has a purpose.

Be very clear: The man who works just for his salary, just for money, for him only the payday will be a beautiful day. He will be happy only on that one day. He sells his 29 days every month for that one day. He is selling his 29 days just for that one day of happiness.

I don't say, 'Don't take your salary.' But let it not be the only goal in your life. Let it not play a major role in your consciousness. That is what Krishna means by

these words: *karmaṇyevādhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu kadācana* - you can do only your duty, you have no right to its fruit. If you think of the fruit, you will lose the joy of doing, living! The meaning of living is experienced only when you understand the beauty of purposelessness. This is a beautiful verse! It is the essence of the Gita!

Two things you need to understand from this: One, He says, let your inner space not be contaminated by the purpose of life. Please understand, when I say inner space, I mean your mind. When you close your eyes, what comes into your mind is your inner space.

If your inner space is filled with the purposes of life, be very clear you are running behind something which will never give you fulfillment. He says, 'Let your inner space not be disturbed or filled with purposes.'

One important thing you must understand; by nature, your inner space is filled with energy; your inner space, what you refer to as *ātman*, spirit or soul, is filled with blissful energy, eternal bliss. The more you free your inner space of other furniture or 'purposes', the more you empty yourself of goals, the more the space for bliss.

For example, this room is filled with space. The more furniture you put in it, the more space will leave this room. Please understand that this room is not empty; no place is empty. It is filled with space. It is filled with ether. This room is filled with the energy of ether. The more furniture you bring in, the more ether will be pushed out; the lesser will be the ether energy.

In the outer space, if you furnish your home, it will look very nice. But if you furnish your inner space, it will look very ugly.

Don't furnish your inner space. Don't bring more furniture into your inner space. Let your inner space be empty. Of course then, it will never be empty. It will be filled with bliss! The more inner space you create, the more blissful your life will be, the more ecstatic your life will be, the more joyful your life will be. Your inner space needs to be empty. That is what Krishna means by saying, 'Don't be attached to results.'

If you continuously think about the result, you will never be able to perform your action completely; you will always be goal-oriented; you will never enjoy the path. Not enjoying the path is the worst hell you can happen be trapped in.

Again and again Krishna says, '*Paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām dharma saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge-yuge*'. It means: I come down to save the innocent and good people, and to destroy the evil-minded people again and again.

People ask me, 'You say *dharma* (duty) is the only thing to be practiced, but in our lives, we see people who are not living according to *dharma*, but who are living more happily; they have more property, more wealth. Why is that?'

Please be very clear, they may have more property, they may have more things in the outer space, but never think they are happy in their inner space; never think they are blissful. When does someone not follow *dharma*? When he follows his ambition! Ambition is the thing that causes you to commit all mistakes, commit all possible sins. Ambition is hell. So remember, such people are probably already in hell.

Don't think we go to hell because we commit sins. No! We commit sins because we *are* in hell. The very ambition is hell; there is no need for a separate hell. Don't think we will reach a separate place called 'hell' at the end of life. The very ambition is hell. People make mistakes because they are in hell.

If you are happy and blissful, you will never disturb others. If you are unhappy, naturally you will vomit that violence on others. The very ambition is enough punishment. You need not wish for him to be punished. Just because of his ambition, he himself misses his whole life.

You can easily miss life by having a purpose to life. If you have salary as the purpose, you will miss twenty-nine days of your life just for that one day, your payday. If you work just for the sake of the weekend, you will miss five days for the sake of those two days. Unless your life itself becomes joyful, unless your working itself becomes ecstasy, unless that *itself* becomes bliss, you cannot experience what Krishna says in this verse: *karmaṇyevādhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu kadācana*

Purpose can be fulfilled, but through purpose, your life can never be fulfilled.

When you carry purposes in your life, *you* are not living; *purposes* are living through you, that's all. In your childhood somebody gives you some purpose like, 'You should become a lawyer, or you should become a doctor.' You are given a purpose and that purpose is fulfilled through your life, but *you* will never feel fulfilled.

Never make the mistake of thinking that you will be fulfilled when your purpose is fulfilled. No! *Your* fulfillment is completely different from the fulfillment of your purpose.

If you want to experience fulfillment, you have to work in a different direction. It is a totally different experience. It is a totally different dimension of your life. If you want fulfillment of your being, listen to what Krishna says here.

I think Krishna is the first and the last master who declared the Truth as it is. No statement can be the Ultimate, that is why I say 'as far as I know.' Krishna is the first and last master who declared the truth as it is.

Two things: Always, people who are active in the outer world, know the techniques to achieve success in the outer world. People who are active in the inner world know the techniques to achieve success in the inner world.

But Krishna knows both! He is the only master who is an enlightened man and a king. He knows how to give a technique to achieve total success in the outer world and in the inner world. He shows you how to furnish your outer space and how to keep your inner space empty. That is life in totality.

The whole of Gita is only about this one idea: how to furnish your outer space with the ultimate luxuries and how to keep your inner space in the ultimate bliss.

Krishna is the only one who has produced a formula for inner space and outer space together. He teaches about keeping your inner space in eternal bliss and keeping your outer space in ultimate luxury.

You can't expect this from a Buddha because Buddha gave up the outer space. He lived with just three pieces of clothing and he lived the life of a monk. So he taught how to remain simple and blissful.

But Krishna lived as a king. Krishna lived not like a king, but as a king. Only Krishna can give practical instructions. Only Krishna can give a manual for practical spiritual living. With all other masters, their manual is useful only for monks who are sitting in monasteries. Only Krishna's manual is useful for people who are living a regular lifestyle.

Here He says, 'Not merely by abstaining from work can one achieve freedom from action.' You can't achieve freedom from action by moving away from work.

I saw a monk who was considered a great *Paramahansa* because he never got angry. His claim to greatness was that he never got angry. There was no need to get angry because he was sitting in the Himalayas!

He was sitting in the Himalayas and people were there to give him food everyday. In the morning somebody brought him breakfast, at noon somebody brought him lunch, at night somebody brought him dinner! Somebody gave him

clothes. What was the need to get angry? He was respected because he never got angry. Usually, human beings respect anyone who does something that they cannot do. If you want to be respected in society, just do something that others can't do, that's all.

So this person was considered great because he never shouted at anybody. Of course, nobody realised that there was no need for him to shout at anybody, because he was sitting in the Himalayas and being taken care of by his devotees and disciples.

One year, his disciples requested him, 'Master, let us go to the *Kumbh Mela* in Nasik.' The biggest gathering of humanity happens in India during the *Kumbh Mela*. Every four years, the biggest gathering of humanity happens in India at this event. It is not just the biggest spiritual gathering, but the biggest gathering in the world - millions of people, tens of millions of people. Seventy million people attended the last *Kumbh Mela*. Seventy million!

Anyhow, they convinced the monk to go to the *Kumbh Mela*. After he attended the *Kumbh Mela* and was about to return to his Himalayan abode, all his disciples left him! When he came down from the Himalayas, his routine got disturbed. Only then did his disciples experience his anger. They realised that he would also shout at others, get irritated and be angry.

Please be very clear, as long as a difficult situation doesn't arise, all are great saints! Everyone is a saint till a crisis happens. Only when a crisis happens can you judge whether one is a real saint or just an escapist.

Abstaining from work or moving away from work cannot give you freedom from action. To have freedom from action, your inner space needs to be purified. Your inner space should become empty. You need to remove furniture from your inner space. Renouncing furniture in the outer world is not going to help you. Only removing furniture from the inner world is going to help you.

The idea that life has a purpose should be renounced. That is why Krishna says, 'Just by renouncing, just by outer renunciation, perfection can never be achieved; perfection can never happen.'

One more thing, if you renounce the outer world, you will be thinking about the outer world all the more. If you renounce the outer world, the outer world will fill your inner space even more.

A small story:

An enlightened master and his disciple were walking near a river. They were supposed to cross the river to go to their monastery, their ashram. On the way, a young lady was standing near a river. She wanted to cross the river, but was afraid to do so. She asked the master, 'Master, can you help me cross this river?'

He said, 'Why not? Please come.'

He just lifted her, crossed the river, left her on the other bank, and continued walking towards the ashram. The disciple was observing the whole scene. He was not able to digest what he saw. He was burning inside him. Maybe he was jealous! He was not able to digest it.

After reaching the ashram he was not able to control himself and asked his master, 'Master, you are a *sanyāsi* (monk). How can you touch a woman, that too a young woman, and carry her through the river? How can you do that?'

The master turned, smiled at him and said, 'I left her long ago. Why are you still carrying her?'

Please be very clear, renouncing in the inner space, or emptying your inner space is the real thing to be achieved. That is what Krishna says here. Once you have renounced in the inner space, it doesn't matter what you do in the outer world. Nothing will touch you.

*Q: If we are to drop the memories of what happened in the past as the master indicates to his disciple, won't there be more problems? People do learn from their past, from their past mistakes. If they drop their impressions of the past, they will suffer. Wouldn't they?*

Think for a moment about your self. Think about all the problems you have. Think about the most serious problems that you have. You will find that these are repetitive. They are caused by the same conditions.

You have walked the path before, you have faced the same situation many times earlier, and yet you act in the same manner as before, resulting in the same problem. Do you really ever learn?

Have you learnt to keep quiet when your wife says something to incite you? You know from the past that she is baiting you and you have always fallen for that bait. Yet, you rise to the same bait again. You know that you get angry easily and that makes you do irrational things. Does that knowledge stop you from getting angry?

You may say, 'That is my nature, how can I change it?' If you cannot change it, who can? Who suffers as a result? The truth is that you are not bringing in the intelligence to learn from your past behavior and past errors to rectify them. You act out of a state of unconsciousness based on judgments that your unconscious mind has already made for you.

Carrying the load of your memories does not in any manner help you prevent the same mistakes from being made again. In fact it ensures that you make the same mistakes again.

When the master tells his disciple that he left the woman behind a long time ago, and that the disciple was still carrying her, the master refers to the judgment that the disciple had made. The judgment is based on the past conditioning of the disciple. Every past memory carries a certain conditioning that is attached to it. That is what we call as the emotion associated with the memory. It is not the mere memory of the incident, which in fact is neutral, but the emotion attached to that memory, the judgment that you pass as a result of that emotion, that needs to be dropped.

As long as you retain these incidents as emotion-laden memories, they have the power to rule you and influence your decisions. Also, most decisions are based on memories retained in your unconscious mind, and so they can rarely be useful. They only cause more suffering. For example, you won't even know why you are reacting in a certain way to a certain situation. You don't know because the reaction or emotion will be bound by a memory that is stored in your unconscious. This is what we mean by memories stored in the unconscious.

Dropping the memories is really about dropping your judgments about these events and the emotions connected to these memories. Dropping them enables you to drop your negativities. You will feel clean and you feel liberated.

These emotion-laden memories are embedded in our unconscious and drive our decisions and actions. What we think are rational decisions are in fact mostly illogical decisions driven by unconscious embedded memories. These memories are called *samskāras*.

*Saṃskāras* are memories of experiences, mainly of unfulfilled desires, which are buried deep within our unconscious mind. They are extremely powerful. Many of our emotional and physical disturbances are caused by these *saṃskāras*, also called engrams by some psychologists. These are a collection of value systems and beliefs that we accumulate from childhood based on upbringing and experiences.

These *saṃskāras*, whether you believe it or not, are also carried over from previous lives. Our energy body, the spirit or soul, when it disengages from the material body-mind system at death, carries the mindset arising from the experiences of the life that we lived. This mindset defines the way we are born again. I can tell you in all honesty, based on my experience, that this is absolutely true.

In our Life Bliss programs, we teach you how to identify and dissolve these *saṃskāras*. In the Life Bliss Program - level two, also called the *Nityānanda Spūrana* Program, the entire process is one of eliminating your unconscious, embedded memories. Accumulated *saṃskāras* are dissolved and those that you brought with you at birth are revealed.

The *saṃskāras* that you were born with have the energy needed for fulfillment. Once you understand what these are, you can pursue them to fulfillment. This fulfillment is the ultimate liberation that is actually the meaning of your life. This is why you took this birth.

Dissolution of the wasteful memories is the cleansing of the emotions attached to these memories. In these Life Bliss Programs you are led through techniques to relieve your past experiences in a superconscious meditative state. This re-living helps in relieving you of the emotions associated with these memories.

Look at it this way. These emotion-filled memories, caught in your cells as biomemory, are like heavy video files that occupy huge amounts of disk space. When the emotions are stripped away, the files become bare text files and shrink in size to a large extent!

This is what happens. Your memories still remain so that they can be useful. However, all the emotions attached to these memories are stripped off and destroyed. So, when these memories do come back, they do not haunt you. You just witness them and move on.

When this process is internalized, all your negativities are removed. You are no longer judgmental based on your past experiences and memories. Judgmental behavior is not caused by memories, but by the positive and negative emotions



attached to these memories. Even what we imagine to be positive is never positive. The positive quality is a result of your ego and conditioning. An experience that gave you pleasure at one time and is remembered as being positive rarely brings you the same pleasure when repeated!

Dissolution of these emotions, removal of these *samskāras*, transforms you. It is as if a veil is lifted from your eyes. You start understanding the true meaning of life. You start figuring out who you are and why you are here.

This is what I have defined as my mission. My mission is your transformation.



## To Be In Action Is Human Nature

*3.5 Surely, not even for a moment can anyone remain without doing anything.*

*He is always in action, despite himself, as this is his very nature.*

*3.6 He who restrains the sense organs, but who still thinks of the objects of the senses, is deluded and is called a hypocrite.*

*3.7 He who begins controlling the senses with the mind and performs selfless work through the organs of action is superior, O Arjuna.*

*3.8 Do your prescribed work, as doing work is better than being idle.*

*Even your own body cannot be maintained without work.*

Usually people ask, 'Swamiji, you say that life is purposeless. Then I may as well just lie down and relax. Who will give me food? Who will pay my bills?'

Let me tell you, you can never lie down forever. You may lie down for the next four or five days, because you always go to the extreme, like a pendulum. Now the pendulum is at one extreme.

If you remove your hand, it will swing to the other extreme. For a maximum of one week you will be able to lie down. After that, you won't be able to lie down. By your very nature you will start doing some work.

When I say life is purposeless, I am not asking you to just lie down and relax in your house. All I am saying is, 'Let your body and mind work without disturbing your inner space. You don't have to sell your inner space to enjoy the outer place. You don't have to sell your inner bliss to have outer comforts.'

‘By your very nature,’ Krishna gives the assurance here, ‘By your very nature, your body and mind will work; if you just keep quiet that is enough; they will function beautifully.’

Somebody asked me, ‘*Swamiji*, how can I do the right thing? How should I train my mind to do the right thing?’

I told him, ‘Just keep quiet. Automatically your body and mind will do the right thing. If you just get out of your system, that is enough, the Divine will get in.’

All we need to do is just get out, for the Divine to enter.

‘By nature,’ He says, ‘*prakṛti-jair-guṇaiḥ*’- by their very nature your body and mind know the right thing to do.’ The problem however is that you never trust your body and mind. You never follow your body and mind fully. You always trust your ego and it finally dumps you! Yet you never trust your body and mind.

Be very clear, your body and mind by nature will do their work. All you need to do is keep quiet, relax from your ego. Don’t think your inner space is needed for the outer work. The person who understands what *nitya* (eternal) is, and what *anitya* (transient) is, the person who understands what is eternal and what is ephemeral and relaxes into Existence is always in eternal consciousness. He always resides in *nitya ānanda* – eternal bliss!

Krishna says, ‘A *karma yogi* (one who follows the path of action) is a man who relaxes into *nitya ānanda* and does his work.’

Just relax into your inner space, and automatically you will be guided. You always think, ‘If I relax mentally thinking that life is purposeless, how will I know what is right and what is wrong? How will I finish my work on time?’

Please be very clear, when you worry about what is right and what is wrong, you will not make small mistakes; you will commit big blunders. The person who doesn’t worry, who never bothers, may make small mistakes. But the person who continuously worries will never make small mistakes; he will commit big blunders. And I tell you, to take this leap of faith needs courage. Even if you make one or two mistakes, what is wrong?

Taking the risk and jumping, and living without worrying, is what I call courage, the courage to enter into spiritual life. When you take the jump, you will naturally make some small mistakes. Don’t worry about them.

Putting up with that mistake is what I call penance. Penance is nothing but accepting the small mistakes which you make when the conscious transition happens in your being.

When you move from ephemeral consciousness to eternal consciousness, when you move from worry to bliss, when you move from falsehood to truth, you will make a few mistakes.

You will fall and rise just like a baby learning to walk. When babies learn to walk, they always fall the first few times. But just because of that, can you say they should never walk? No! Even if they make one or two small mistakes, they have to stand up and start walking. Those small mistakes of falling and trying to stand up are the penance done to learn how to walk.

In the same way when you start trying to live without the ego, initially you may commit mistakes. But don't worry about that. That is penance.

Have courage and just enter into the zone of no-ego. Enter into the zone of eternal consciousness. Simply start living and realize the purposelessness of Existence.

Decide, 'Today onwards I will live without worrying. Life is too short to be spent worrying.'

Don't bother about the goals - just drop the goals. The moment you understand the beauty of purposelessness, all the wounds which you have created in your inner space will be healed. You will fall into the comfort of eternal bliss.

A man who keeps his senses under control, but who is not able to keep his inner space under control is called a pretender, a hypocrite, says Krishna.

Please be very clear, the quality of your life will be judged only based on the quality of your inner space, not the quality of your outer space. When you leave your body and enter into your next life, nobody is going to keep accounts of what type of car you drove, in what type of house you lived or what your bank balance was. No! These details will not come with you.

How you lived, how your inner space was, what was the quality of your inner space when you lived, these are what you are going to carry forward with you. That is why the scriptures state, 'You are going to carry with you only the *saṃskāra* (engraved memories), the *karma* (unfulfilled desires) and the *vāśana* (mindset) of your inner space - not the outer space.'

A beautiful story from Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the enlightened master from India:

A monk was living in a temple, doing meditation and preaching the glory of the Lord. Opposite to his dwelling lived a prostitute who was busy all day long. She was deeply devoted to the Lord. No matter what her business was, she was immersed in the silent contemplation of His glory.

As was the tradition in earlier times, she and the others from her group would serve the temple by singing and dancing in front of the deity.

Everyday this monk would notice everyone who entered the prostitute's house, at what time they entered, at what time they left, how many people entered; he would keep track of everything because he had no other work. When you don't have any work you will be interested in other people's work;

Continuously, he kept accounts of how much time each person spent there, etc. He was almost like the diary maintainer for that prostitute!

He maintained a complete diary of who came, who left, who visited regularly, who came once in a while or often. The whole day he thought about what was going on in there.

But the prostitute lived in a different way. She thought, 'My life, my natural duty is this. This has been given to me in this life. I don't know any other profession. I have to live only like this. For my food I have to live this life. But please save me, O Lord! Let my mind and heart always be at Your feet.' She was deeply devoted to Krishna. Her inner space was filled with the Divine. Her inner space was filled with God's name and Divine love.

Life went on. After many years, suddenly, both the monk and the prostitute died on the same day. The story is really beautiful!

Both of them reached Yama Dharma's (Lord of death) court for judgment. First, the prostitute came in. Yama Dharma saw her list of sins and merits and said, 'Alright! Don't worry. You lived all your life thinking of the Divine, so you can go to heaven.' She was sent to heaven.

It was then the turn of the monk. The moment the monk arrived, Yama Dharma said, 'This is your list of sins and merits. Throughout your life you thought about the wrong things, so you must go to hell.'

The monk started shouting, 'How dare you send me to hell!' He is a professional preacher, so he knows how to shout! He started shouting, 'I will sue you.'

Yama Dharma said, 'Please relax. Up here in heaven we don't bother about what you do in life; we bother about how you live. Through your body you lived a pure life. Look at planet earth and see how your body is being honored.'

There the monk saw that his body was being honored like that of a celebrity; people were falling at the feet of his body. Big garlands were offered. Grand worship was being offered to the body. His body was being carried to a tomb earmarked for holy men and his body was receiving great respect.

Yama continued, 'Through your body you lived a pure life; your body is now getting the rewards. But through the mind, you lived an impure life; so you have to go to hell.'

Yama continued, 'Similarly, she lived an impure life through the body. Look at her body.'

Nobody was there even to care. Because she was a prostitute, no husband, no sons, nobody was there even to do the last rites; the body was stinking. The scavengers just came and dragged the body and dumped it somewhere.

Yama continued, 'See! Through the body she lived an impure life. Her body is suffering. But through the mind she lived a pure life, a divine life. She is therefore going to the Divine.'

It is important how you live in your inner space. It is your inner space which matters. Please be very clear, again and again Krishna declares:

*karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya ya āste manasā smaran ।  
indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate ॥ 3.6*

If you can't clear your inner space, even if you control your body, even if you control your senses, you are just a hypocrite. Your life will not be a blissful life; your life will not be a real life. Not only will it not be a spiritual life, it will not even be life!

The meaning of living is bliss, but there is no purpose. The more you think about purposes, the more worries you will create; the more will you try to squeeze the most out of life. But life is much more intelligent than you.

When you try to squeeze the maximum out of life, it just slips through your fingers.

Life is like a river. If you place your hands in the river and keep them open, the river will always be there in your hands. But if you try to hold it, you will have only empty hands!

Life is a flowing river. If you just allow it to happen it will continuously flow through you. The moment you try to possess it, you will have only empty hands. You will not be able to have life itself.

The moment you experience in your inner space that nothing is going to be with you permanently, a deep healing, a breeze enters your consciousness. Your whole inner space is healed.

You have so many wounds in your inner space. Wounds created by your desires, wounds created by your failures, wounds created by your near and dear ones. All these wounds will be healed with this one medicine.

This one understanding that life is purposeless, that whatever you achieve is just nothing, and that nothing is going to be with you, is enough.

A small story about Alexander:

Alexander the Great, who committed so many murders, can never be called 'the Great'. Please be very clear: Never teach your kids that Alexander is great. Then you are inspiring them to commit murders! You are inspiring them to enter into war. Unconsciously, you are putting all these ideas into their heads. Never do that.

Of course, he did one good thing. Fortunately or unfortunately, he met an enlightened master in India. Somehow, his teacher in Greece gave him the idea, 'Bring one enlightened master and the Vedas from India, and I will change the whole society.'

So Alexander decided he would take at least one enlightened person from India. Somehow he got the chance to meet an enlightened person. He invited him, 'Please come to our country.'

The master just laughed and said, 'No, no! I don't want to come anywhere; I am happy here.'

Alexander said, 'No! Please come. I will give you a big palace. Here you are living like a beggar without even clothes, without even enough food. Please come with me. I will give you a big palace and all the comforts.'

The master just laughed and said, 'No. I am quite happy here, I don't want to come.'

You know the next step a king will take. First, by addressing the master's greed he tried to entice him. When it did not work out, the next step, he tried through the fear factor. He simply took his sword out, pointed it at the master and said, 'If you are not ready to come, you will be killed.'

Faced with the naked sword, the master just laughed. Please be very clear, laughing now is very easy, but laughing when faced with a naked sword is very difficult, especially when the person who is holding the sword is a king - because if he kills there is nobody to even question him.

But in front of the naked sword, the master laughed and said, 'Fool! You are a liar.' He straightaway looked into the eyes of Alexander and said, 'Fool! You are a liar.'

For the first time Alexander was shaken. For the first time he was afraid! He asked the master, 'Are you not afraid?'

The master replied, 'Afraid of what? You can never kill me. You may destroy this body, but you cannot kill me.'

That is the courage and confidence gained by the spiritual experience as we study in the Gita:

*nai 'naṁ chindanti śastrāṇi nai 'naṁ dahati pāvakaḥ |  
na cai 'naṁ kledayantyāpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ || 2.23*

It means: *Ātman* or the soul cannot be killed; the soul cannot be destroyed; it cannot be burned.

This had become an experience for the master. That is why he had such courage and confidence. He just laughed.

Slowly, Alexander started thinking, 'If he can laugh in front of my naked sword, how courageous he must be!' For the first time he was shaken, because



he had never seen anybody who could laugh in front of a naked sword, who could laugh in the face of death. Even *he* was afraid.

Please be very clear, all the so-called great warriors are cowards. They kill others before they are killed, that's all. They live in constant fear of death. That is why they kill others. Just to hide their cowardice or to escape from the fear of death, they start killing others. Alexander was totally shaken. He was shocked to see the courage of this master. He asked him, 'Please tell me something. How are you so courageous, so bold?'

The master asked him in return, 'Tell me, why did you come to India?'

Alexander replied, 'To conquer India.'

The master continued, 'After that, what are you going to do?'

Alexander replied confidently, 'I will conquer the next country.'

The master again asked, 'After that, what are you going to do?'

Alexander continued, 'I will conquer the next country.'

The master persisted, 'And after that?'

Alexander replied as if the answer was obvious, 'I will conquer the whole world.'

The master questioned further, 'After that?'

Alexander replied, 'I will relax and enjoy.'

The master said, 'Fool! That is what I am doing now!'

The master said, 'Don't you see that that is what I am doing now? *Why* do you need to go around and conquer the whole world to relax and enjoy? That is what I am doing now right in front of your eyes!'

Only a man who has understood the impermanence of life can relax and surrender totally even in the face of death. The master gave a glimpse of the Truth to Alexander.

That is why Alexander said to his ministers, 'After my death, during the funeral procession, please let both my hands hang out of the coffin, visible to all. Let people know that even the great Alexander could not carry anything with him'.

Even Alexander could not carry anything with him.

This is a beautiful story.

You need to understand three things. The first thing is the courage and confidence radiated by an enlightened person.

The next thing is the purposelessness of our running. For what was Alexander running? To relax and enjoy. This master was already doing the same thing!

The third thing is that we are not going to carry anything with us when we leave. Even if the whole world worships you as a king, you cannot carry that with you! You have to go empty handed.

Mad people also claim they are kings, while people who are sitting on the throne also claim they are kings. Why is it that the former are put in an asylum and the latter are respected?

If the person is cunning enough to convince others about what he says, he is respected and given a throne. People who are innocent, people who are not so cunning, people who are not able to frighten others into accepting what they say, are put in the asylum, that's all.

In Existence, there is no mad person, and there is no king. Both are one and the same. A person who can make others believe that what he says is the truth sits on the throne. The one who doesn't have that much cunningness sits in the asylum.

A small story:

One man in India suddenly started thinking and claiming that he was Jawaharlal Nehru. At that time, Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister of India.

If he had only been claiming, it would have been okay. He started dressing like him, which was also okay. Then he started writing letters to all the officials and signing them, 'Jawaharlal Nehru.' Naturally, he was taken to an asylum and treated for six months.

After the treatment, he started behaving normally. The doctor said, 'I think you can be discharged now.' The day he was about to be discharged, fortunately or unfortunately, Jawaharlal Nehru himself visited the asylum.

They brought this man to Nehru and introduced him. 'Sir, he is the person who used to claim he is Jawaharlal Nehru.'

After the formal introduction, the man asked Nehru, 'Who are you?' Nehru said, 'I am Jawaharlal Nehru.'

The patient said, 'Please stay here for six months. They will cure you!'

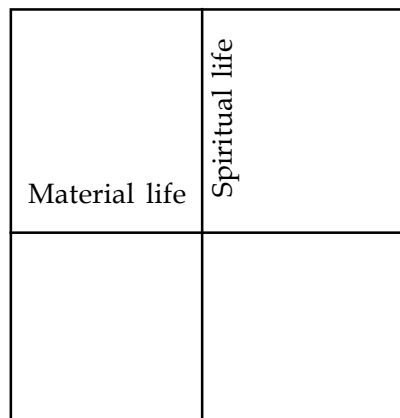
Understand that there is no difference between these two. Somehow one is able to convince others that what he says is the truth. The other one is not able to convince others, that's all! There is no other difference.

In Existence, there are no boundaries. In Existence there is no post.

Never think that having comforts in the outer world will give you inner fulfillment. Never! All developed countries are filled with depression. They have the best roads, the best dams, the best bridges, the best infrastructure, but their people are depressed. Never think that outer space will give you inner space.

If you want inner space, you need to work for the inner space. You need to understand the dynamics of inner space.

Here, Krishna is giving you the technology to gain inner space. Let us see how we work, or how our mind moves. This graph represents your being. Material life



is the horizontal line and spiritual life is the vertical line. You continuously worry about whether to choose the horizontal line or the vertical line; whether to go on this (horizontal) path, or that (vertical) path.

You are always stuck somewhere on the horizontal line or somewhere on the vertical line. You try to move but you are always caught in the dilemma of whether to go this way or that way.

Mind is dilemma. Mind is nothing but dilemma. Whatever you choose, whether material life or spiritual life, you will always feel you are missing the other part. You will continuously feel you are missing something.

As long as you think you are the mind, as long as you live with the mind, you will have this problem of material life versus spiritual life.

Just like how people have goals in material life, they have goals in spiritual life too. There are so many people who say, 'I should meditate for seven hours daily. I should become enlightened. I should become that, I should do this, I should be that.'

Please be very clear, goals in material life and goals in spiritual life, both make you go mad. If you want to become mad, continuously think of some goal. It is the easiest way to go mad! But if you can just withdraw into your being, you will just forget about the goal. And you can still work. By withdrawing into your being, you stop trying to locate a purpose somewhere all the time and running towards it.

The man who runs behind the material goals, will always feel he is missing the spiritual goal. This is the reason all rich communities invariably follow spiritual masters. They carry a deep guilt and fear that they are missing spirituality.

You can see this in every society. If the community is rich, they will have strong gurus, because of the deep guilt that they are missing spirituality.

Please be very clear, that is why the so-called religious men and rich men are always trying to be together. You will always see these two types together because the rich man needs the religious man and the religious man needs the rich man. Both feel that they have missed the other aspect in their own lives.

The person who travels along the horizontal line feels he is missing the spiritual life and the person who travels along the vertical line feels he is missing the material life. Both are trying to fulfill each other cerebrally.

The materialist fulfills the spiritualist's ideal and the spiritualist fulfills the materialist's ideal. The person who chooses the spiritual life feels that if rich men are around him, what he is missing will be fulfilled. In the same way, the person

who chose the worldly life feels that if he goes to a spiritual man or a religious man, he will be fulfilled. Both are helping each other.

The man who realizes the purposelessness of both these goals, the purposelessness of the running, just falls back into his being. When you realize that whatever you consider the purpose or goal of your life is ultimately meaningless, the very moment you realize this and the glamour is gone, that very moment the need for perspiration is also gone; you stop running.

Mind you, it is not inspiration; it is just perspiration that you give up! The moment all respect for the purpose is gone from your life, you will simply fall into your being.

One important thing: The moment you fall into your being, you explode! Not only do you start flowing in the direction of both horizontal and vertical lines, but you also explode in 360 degrees in all dimensions. Whatever you can imagine and whatever you can't even imagine will start happening. Only then do you become a truly multi-dimensional being.

A man who has fallen into his being, one who has dropped goals, who has tasted the beauty of purposelessness of Existence, who has realized, who has fallen into his being, explodes in 360 degrees, in all dimensions. He simply radiates in all directions!

He starts experiencing the ultimate bliss of spiritual life and the ultimate happiness of material life and something more! Only *he* enters into eternal bliss or Krishna consciousness.

As long as you are caught up with material goals or spiritual goals, you travel only in one direction, because you think you are body or mind.

The more you are caught up with purposes, the more you will think you are body or mind. When you realize the purposelessness of it all, you will straightaway fall into the depths of your being.

Please be very clear, the Original Sin is thinking of yourself as body and mind. Don't think that Adam eating the apple was the Original Sin. No! Why should we suffer for Adam's sin? The Original Sin is not Adam eating the apple; it is you thinking of yourself as body or mind.

Actually, for an individual to become enlightened, you don't need the whole Gita. This single verse is enough to make an individual enlightened.

Then why am I speaking on all the verses? It is only because there are so many different kinds of individuals. This are different keys for different individuals, which is the reason for explaining all the verses.

If you can fall into yourself, just look into yourself and understand this one verse for yourself, not for the sake of going home and explaining it to your wife, or to your mother-in-law, or to your friend, or to somebody else, but for your own self.

Whenever I speak, understand that I am speaking to you. Don't prepare notes in your mind to go and repeat it to somebody else. When you prepare notes you think, 'I should go and tell this to my husband; he really needs it.' When you do this, you are sure to miss the experience yourself!

Just allow this one idea to work on you: the truth of the purposelessness of life. You can just close your eyes and think, contemplate for two or three minutes: 'What is really the purpose of my life? Why am I doing what I am doing? Where am I going? What is happening?'

If your inner eye opens, if your inner space experiences the beauty of purposelessness, that is enough. You will fall into your being.

As of now, you can experience neither material life nor spiritual life because when you are here, you are looking there and when you are there, you are looking here. You never experience either in a solid way.

Your mind is not where your body is. You are not living inside your boundary. The other side of the river always looks greener. Something else is always calling you. Only when you experience the beauty of purposelessness will you be able to understand what Krishna says throughout *Karma Yoga*.

Relax! Understand this one thing. Just understanding this one single idea can transform your whole way of thinking, working and living. When you understand there is no purpose of life, you will start enjoying every single moment; you will start living intensely in every single inch of your body. Every moment will become meaningful.

When you think that life as a whole has a purpose, the individual moment will lose its meaning. If you think one month of your working time is worth fifty thousand dollars, you will judge the value of that one month as being only fifty thousand dollars.

Please be very clear, one month of your life is more than just fifty thousand dollars! If you calculate the value of your life at fifty thousand dollars a month, it may come to some 10 million, 20 million or even 100 million dollars.

Suddenly, if someone says, 'I will give you 50 million dollars, give me your life,' will you be able to give him your life? No! But, this is the way you are calculating and working! We are ready to sell our mind, our moments, our inner space by calculating the value of our lives. Logically, you fix the rate for your life. Once you fix the rate, only the rate is on your mind. You forget the work itself, or living itself, which is beautiful. But you miss it.

If you think the whole has a purpose, then the part loses its meaning. When you realize that the whole has no purpose, the part will become meaningful. Your very living, every day itself, will become very beautiful. Your life everyday, your living, your sitting, your walking, your standing, everything will become a joyful experience.

That is why they say *sat chit ānanda*, which means 'the bliss of the very existence'. Your very existence is blissful. You don't have to think that in the end you will have bliss. No! Your very *existence* is blissful. The meaning of existence is bliss, eternal bliss, *nitya ānanda*. But you need to take steps towards that bliss.

By nature, man has to work. What I mean is, by their very nature, the senses have to be engaged in some action. Even if you try and control them and do nothing externally, the very act of restraint is an action in itself.

The choice is really about how to work. Here, Krishna gives the answer to that. He says that we should perform work with devotion and without attachment to the results. Work without unnecessarily being bothered about whether or not it will fetch the results that you expect. If when we work, our thoughts are on the future, then we are not in the present moment. Am I right? Then how can we be performing to our fullest potential? How can I say that I am doing my work with full devotion if my mind is not totally merged with the task at hand? It's not possible. And how can I get the results I want if I'm not working to my full potential?

When do you get worried or afraid? It is when you have an expected result, when there is an unwritten expectation, and an unconscious desire to achieve something as the result of an action. Krishna says, 'Drop the very desire, drop the very expectation.'

We wonder, 'How can we function if we drop expectations?' Be very clear, I am not saying you should not plan and or you should do something without thinking. I am saying, 'Plan, but plan chronologically, not psychologically.'

You see, there are two things: chronological planning and psychological planning.

Chronological planning is planning on a timescale. You decide you to get up at a particular time, finish your morning routine by a particular time, reach the office at a particular time, finish the list of tasks you planned at the office by a certain time, and so on. This is a practical way to organize your work in such a way that it can give the best results. This is fine.

But what do we do? We don't stop at this. We review the plan in our head over and over again, thinking in different ways about whether we will be able to manage it. We keep supposing, 'What if this happens? What if that happens?'

In the name of contingency planning, we just worry. A contingency plan should help come up with alternative solutions. Then it won't sap our energy. But we are thinking about how to handle something if the plan does not go as expected. Instead, if we apply our awareness to the problem in an objective way, the solution will simply stand out.

But we complicate the whole process. We get worked up about contingency situations and introduce a complex negativity in the whole thinking process. We start hoping unconsciously that such a situation will not arise. We start worrying about what the possible unknowns are that have not been accounted for in the plan, and what not!

Psychological planning boosts your ego. It makes you feel great and worthy. It makes you stay serious and feel that you are handling great things.

Krishna says, 'One who does devotional work, without attachment, and controlling the senses, is superior to one who merely pretends to be in control of his senses and acts in renunciation.'

There are people of the intellectual type, who are philosophers, who are well versed in all the scriptures, who look down upon the devotional and emotional practitioners! Intellectuals believe that their dry understanding of the non-duality of the Self is superior to that of those who fall at the feet of the Divine. Krishna firmly says, 'No, it is not so!'



Krishna says that what makes the difference is your lack of expectations, the sense of purposelessness that defines your state. *Sanyās* (renunciation) is a state, not a label. The state of renunciation is not a state of doing nothing. You can never sit without doing anything. Even if you sit still in one place, you are sitting, you are breathing, is it not? The internal functions in your body are happening. Maintaining this very body requires that work be done.

The breath that you take in carries *prāna*, the life energy that sustains you. Constantly, air that is laden with *prāna* goes in, leaves the *prāna* inside and comes out. From the cosmos, we are taking in *prāna* through air. This is also an action being performed to sustain the body. So, you cannot say you are not doing anything.

You may think that it is better not to do any work rather than analyze what work you should do, how to do it, whether it will suit you etc. You can take this as an excuse for laziness, for your *tamas*. *Tamas* means laziness, lethargy. When Krishna says, 'I am not the doer, it is just the senses performing the actions according to their nature,' you say, 'Why should I even bother to do anything? '

Be very clear, by your very nature, you will act. Your body and mind, the gross body and the subtle mind, are, by nature, forced to do something.

Just try telling your mind not to do any work, not to think about anything. Try to sit with a completely blank mind, with no mental activity, not thinking about anything. Just relax and try this simple exercise. You will initially try not to think about anything. You will try to be aware if any thought comes to your mind. But, after a few moments, you will find yourself having some thought, about something from the past or the future. Some random thought about something would pass through the mind.

By nature, your mind will think about something or the other. If you try to force silence upon your mind, you will be forcing a dead silence, the silence of suppression. How long can you sustain that? The moment you drop your guard, mind will express its nature and start the wandering.

So, neither expression nor suppression is the solution. It is better to be aware of the nature of the senses and the mind, and be engaged in work with a sense of devotion. Be aware that when you are in action, it is the senses acting. Then you will not get attached to the action or its result. Then you are free; you are liberated from the bondage of action. Action binds you only when you consider yourself the doer and have expectations about things being a certain way.

**Q: Swamiji, is it possible that meditation can take us into inaction? Even though my intention is to energize myself through meditation, I find I lose interest in things after meditation. Why?**

This is an interesting and real issue.

Normally, you are in a state of action, which is the state of *rajas*. When you are in *rajas*, also described as aggression or passion, you are externally oriented. Your thoughts are focused on action of some sort or another, usually with some goal in mind. This is the state of most human beings, whether in business, academics or looking after the household. You plan your activities and goals and work towards fulfilling them.

When you go into meditation and practice seriously (this happens especially when you are in an ashram environment), you realize the futility of these goal-based actions. Suddenly you will see everything that you are doing with a negative attitude. A lot of negativity will seem to be surfacing in you, telling you that whatever you are doing is meaningless.

When you drop these negativities and do want to have anything to do with them, the state that you move into is *tamas*, or lazy inaction. Then suddenly you will find that you are uninterested in everything. You may just want to sleep, that is all. It is not quite depression, but a disinclination to act, because all actions seem meaningless.

This may last a while, a few days, but not for long. Let it happen. Allow yourself to go through this process. Let all the negativities work themselves out of you.

Then gradually you will move back into action with awareness, *satva*. You will act, since you cannot but act, as Krishna says, but now you will act without a purpose! The results of your action will no longer be of relevance to you. Success and failure no longer bother you.

So do not worry if you slip into what you think is laziness while practicing meditation. It is likely to happen. It is a normal process. Just continue and you will move into purposeless action.

People think that moving directly from *rajas* - aggression to *satva* - calmness is the natural evolution. It does not work that way. When you move out of your normal active and aggressive behavior, you first fall into *tamas*, inactivity. This is the movement of the mind when it turns away from aggression; it moves into inaction.

When this shift is caused by meditation, the inaction does not last long. The mind soon moves into a relaxed, calm state.

I have talked about this elsewhere in detail. The mind is constantly looking out through the senses. Its focus is external. It settles on the periphery. However, deep inside there is a longing inwards. So it is constantly getting pulled towards the center from the periphery. It is constantly getting pulled from the material to the spiritual.

Usually it settles somewhere in the middle. That is why I say that all humans are eccentric! Their senses pull them to the periphery and their being attracts them to the center. The mind settles eccentrically in between.

Meditation aids the movement inwards. As attention shifts from the periphery to the core, there is a resistance to what was experienced in the periphery. This leads to temporary inaction and detachment to peripheral experiences.

Once a glimpse of the core is achieved, there is no detachment or dislike. There is neither attachment nor great attraction for something, nor detachment nor dislike for something. All experiences are viewed non-judgmentally and with non-attachment. At the core it is always bliss; it is the state of *nityānanda*, eternal bliss.



## Selfless Service Liberates

*3.9 Work has to be performed selflessly; otherwise, work binds one to this world.*

*O son of Kunti, perform your work for Me and you will do it perfectly, liberated and without attachment.*

*3.10 Brahma, the lord of creation, before creating humankind along with selfless sacrifice said, 'By this selfless service, be more and more prosperous and let it bestow all desired gifts.'*

*3.11 The celestial beings, pleased by this sacrifice, will also nourish you; with this mutual nourishing of one another, you will achieve supreme prosperity.*

*3.12 Satisfied with the selfless service, the celestial beings certainly bestow upon you the desired enjoyments of life. He who enjoys the things given by them without offering anything to the celestial beings is certainly a thief.*

*3.13 Those who eat food after selfless service are free of all sins. Those who prepare food for sense enjoyment do grievous sin.*

There are two techniques by which one can liberate oneself from attachment to work. One is by telling oneself, 'I am not the doer.' By continuously reminding yourself that it is the senses and not you who are doing something; you distance yourself from the action and you are consciously aware that you are not the doer. This is what Krishna explained in the verse before this one.

The other way is by surrendering the fruits of one's work to the Divine, to the ultimate life force that is conducting this universe. This is the technique that Krishna

talks about here. He says, 'Perform your work for Me and you will do it perfectly, liberated and without attachment.'

When you do work as a sincere, humble offering to the Divine, the very attitude of this surrender will make you do the job perfectly and you will be liberated. In your own life you can see this happening. When you are excessively bothered about the results, it is during this time that you actually think you are the doer of the action! That is why you get attached to the work and its results.

This is when you start getting stressed and tense about results. Naturally, when you are tensed, you are not performing at your optimum. You are not performing at maximum efficiency because so much of your valuable energy is getting wasted in being tense. How will you then be able to get your job properly done?

I always tell people, 'When you are afraid to make small mistakes and are extra careful, you end up making big blunders.' You waste your entire life trying to avoid making mistakes and attempting to be perfect, and your life becomes a blunder.

This doesn't mean you can be careless about your work. I am only saying that you should have the courage to make mistakes. Only when you make mistakes can you learn from them. Only then have you seen both sides of the coin. Then, with experience, when you have learnt from the mistake, you will have the perspective of both sides. Otherwise, just at the crucial time, you will make mistakes. You can have this courage only when you are not attached to the ownership of tasks and results.

When you see that Existence is purposeless and you are living in the loving, caring arms of Existence, you will relax and surrender to that very Existence. When you are in this relaxed mood, you can function at your best and enjoy every moment of life without feeling like the doer and therefore worrying about making small mistakes. Real surrender happens when this understanding becomes your experience.

A beautiful story:

A person who had faced a lot of trouble in life felt that he had had enough of his life. He ran away to the forest and wanted to find an enlightened master and achieve liberation. He searched day and night but was not able to find anybody.

Then he decided, 'Whoever comes along this road first, whoever I meet on this road first, I shall accept as my master, that's all. I am going to follow his

instructions. Oh God, I know you are here. Send me a proper person and guide me. That's all I ask.'

He sat down and waited patiently. After two days, one evening, a thief came running that way. The man went and caught hold of the thief's feet saying, 'Oh master, please save me. You are my God. You are my guru. Please give me instructions on how to become enlightened.'

The thief said, 'What is this? Leave me! I am a thief. The palace guards are chasing me; I just robbed the palace.'

The man said, 'No! You are my God. You are my guru. You have to guide me on the path towards enlightenment.'

The thief said, 'Fool! Don't you see I have all these stolen items with me? I have just robbed the palace. Let me go. Otherwise, I will kill you.'

The man said, 'I don't know all that. You are my guru; teach me.'

The thief thought, 'Now, what can I do?' Then he said, 'Alright, you say I am your guru. Then listen to me. Will you do whatever I say?'

The man said, 'Yes, surely I will.'

The thief said, 'Sit down.' The man sat down. The thief said, 'Close your eyes.' He closed his eyes. The thief told him, 'Don't open your eyes until I come back and tell you to open your eyes.' The man sat with all sincerity, his eyes closed, and the thief immediately ran away.

The man continued sitting for hours. Then slowly, days passed, then a week passed; a month passed by. The man sat without food or water, absolutely still. The story says, Lord Shiva, seeing the depth of his sincerity, appeared before him and gave him enlightenment!

This may look like a story. But please understand, it has a beautiful meaning and a truth behind it: the very sincerity is enough. Nothing else is needed.

Surrender has a tremendous power, a tremendous energy. Whether you surrender to an idol or to a person or to your guru, or even a rock, is not important. What is important is the surrender itself.

Vivekananda says beautifully: 'When you pray to God, your prayers actually awaken your own inner potential and it showers blessings on you.'

Even if you see logically, surrender helps you to simply relax. When you are relaxed, you can work beautifully, with intelligence, rather than with your pre-programmed intellect.

A small story:

There was once a bank cashier who used to take all the cash home everyday and bring it back with him the next morning. He had done this for a month and could not do it anymore.

He found himself trembling all the way while driving back home and was not able to sleep at home with all the money in his custody. He finally asked his boss to relieve him of the job since he could not bear the stress any longer.

His boss told him that even if the money were to be lost, he would not be blamed and he could continue with his job. The cashier slept peacefully from that day onwards.

What was the difference in him? He was doing the same job, but why was the fear and tension not there anymore? It was because the responsibility had been shifted to a higher authority, that's all. This is surrender! Do your duty, leaving the responsibility of the results to Existence.

Understand, Existence loves you and understands you better than you understand yourself. See the example of Arjuna; Krishna knew Arjuna better than Arjuna knew himself. The very trust, the very connectedness enabled Arjuna to relate with Krishna, who took him to the ultimate consciousness.

Have simple trust in Existence, in the intelligence of the life force. This is the very life force, the energy that is keeping you alive. This is the energy behind the marvelous functioning of your brain, of your digestive system, of your nervous system.

This is the energy that runs our solar system, all the galaxies and the entire universe, so smoothly. Imagine, is it possible for so many billions of stars and planets to move in such beautiful order even if you had the most modern traffic control system in place? Such a beautiful order, in what appears to be chaos when seen superficially!

Life itself is so unpredictable; you cannot predict what can happen the very next moment! So many billions of living bodies on planet earth, so much diversity!

Logically, it should be an unmanageable chaos. But there is a beautiful order in that very chaos. And in that order, the spontaneity and chaos of Existence fits in so beautifully!

A very beautiful story from the Indian epic Mahabharata:

King Yudhishtira performed a great sacrifice after the battle of Kurukshetra was over. He gave very rich presents to the priests and the poor. They were all impressed by the grandeur of this sacrifice. They praised him saying, 'We have never seen such a great sacrifice in our lifetime.'

Just then, a small mongoose appeared. Half of his body was golden and the other half was brown. He rolled on the ground where the sacrifice was performed. He then exclaimed with sorrow, 'This is no sacrifice at all. Why do you praise this sacrifice?'

The priests were aghast and angry, 'What! You silly mongoose! Did you not see the sacrifice? Thousands of poor people have become very rich. Millions of people have been sumptuously fed. So many jewels and clothes have been distributed!'

The mongoose replied, 'That may be a big sacrifice for you. But to me the sacrifice offered by the poor *brāhmin* was much bigger.'

'What *brāhmin* and what sacrifice are you talking about? We never heard of this!' said the priests.

The mongoose continued, 'There was a poor *brāhmin* in a village. He lived in a small hut with his wife, son and daughter-in-law. Once, there was a great famine. The whole family starved for days on end.

One day, the poor man brought some food home. When they were ready to eat, they heard a voice at their door. The *brāhmin* opened the door and found a guest at the doorstep. In India, we say, *atithi devo bhava*, meaning 'the guest is God Himself'.

The *brāhmin* said, 'O Sir! Please come inside. Please have a seat and have some food.' He gave his portion of the food to the guest. The guest said, 'Sir, I am still hungry. I have been starving for the last fifteen days.'

The wife said to her husband, 'Please give him my share too.' The guest ate this portion also, but he was still hungry. The son said, 'Father, please give him my share also.' The guest ate this and yet he remained dissatisfied. The wife of



the son said, 'O Sir, please have my portion too.' The guest ate this portion also and was fully satisfied. He then blessed the poor *brāhmin* and his family and departed in great joy.

I entered the hut that day and found that these four persons died of starvation. A few grains of rice were found on the ground where the guest had eaten. I rolled myself on those grains. Half of my body became golden. Since then I have been traveling all over the world to find another sacrifice like that. Nowhere have I found one. Nowhere have I been able to convert the other half of my body into gold. This sacrifice of Yudhishtira has not turned the other half of my body into gold. That is the reason why I say that this is no sacrifice at all.'

The sacrifice that Krishna refers to comes from a true sense of surrender to the universe. When we give to others what we can afford to give, it is no sacrifice. When we give to others by denying ourselves, then it is sacrifice. That is why most of the charitable work done by people, even with good intentions, does not fit into the essence of what Krishna says here. Of course, it is better to give others rather than foolishly stuff yourself. You will get sick with indigestion!

But when you give at your own expense, by denying yourself, by starving yourself, you function at the level of the universal energy; you function as part of the principle of *Vasudaiva kuṭumbakam* meaning 'The whole world is my family' as told by Krishna; you operate out of compassion. Then there is no compulsion to give. There is no moral injunction to give. There is no expectation that you will go to heaven if you give and to hell if you don't.

That's why, time and again, I tell people, 'Do not donate anything to the mission in the belief that I will help you pass through the gates of heaven. First of all, there is no heaven, and second, I am not its gatekeeper!'

You will be in heaven when you donate after falling fully in tune with the principles of the mission. You do not have to think about a heaven after you die. You will die in heaven on earth if that is your mental attitude.

There is a joy, an eternal joy, and a bliss that enters your being when you act out of sacrifice, selflessly. The bliss is always there, but when you are free from the filtering ego and mind, you start experiencing that bliss. The garbage of expectations disappears and the bliss is experienced.

This was the principle on which various sacrificial rituals came into existence in the *vedic* culture. These were instruments of mass meditation. The energy of the

cosmic space (*ākāśa*) was captured by the vibrations of the air created by chanting *mantras*. This energised air fuelled the sacred fire in the sacrificial fire pit (*homa kunda*). This energy was transferred to pots of water by physically linking the pots to the fire pit through many threads. This energised holy water was then sprinkled on bodies, deities and the earth to complete the energy cycle. All five energy points: space, air, fire, water and earth were connected through such a ritual to benefit humanity!

It was only a metaphoric offering of all that was sacrificed to the fire. During these rituals, great kings and nobles who performed the rituals gave away to those who lacked material wealth. These rituals helped to maintain material balance.

But, as the mongoose said, even the *rājasūya yāga* of Yudhishtira, performed to celebrate his victory, lacked the spirit of sacrifice of the poor *brāhmin* family. So give away what you need, not what you do not need!

**Q: Swamiji, what is suffering? Why do we suffer? Is suffering essential?**

In the Buddhist tradition, life itself is considered suffering. This is at variance with what I say - that life is bliss and meant to be lived blissfully.

Buddha talked about how we live our lives. I talk about how we *can* live our lives.

Buddha does not talk about sins and merits. His code of conduct is the middle path, one of balance. He implies that there is no real right and wrong, and as long as you lead a balanced life, it is fine.

Buddha also says that desires are the root cause of all suffering. I would like to add a condition. Unfulfilled desires are the root cause of all suffering. When a desire is fulfilled, when it brings with it the energy to fulfill itself, and gets fulfilled, it leaves no traces behind. There is no hangover with respect to that desire. Such are the desires that the energy body brings with it to the body it is born in. These are the desires that each one of us is born with. They come with the energy needed to fulfill themselves and this is what we call *prārabdha karma*.

*Prārabdha karma* are the real needs we are born with. They are the 'opening balance' of energy in the body at birth. They arise out of the mindset (*vāsana*) with which the energy, the soul or *ātman*, leaves the previous body-mind system.

To this opening balance we keep adding acquired desires which do not arise from our core. We see what others have, or are influenced by media such as internet, television, radio, billboards etc, and our list of desires grows. We want to be happy and we think that by adding more and more to our lives we will somehow accomplish it. But we have the energy reserves to fulfill only our natural desires, our *prārabdha*, and not these acquired desires, *āgāmya karmas*. These *āgāmya karmas* are our unconscious desires, our *samskāras* that cause suffering.

These are the desires that Buddha refers to which he says lead to suffering in our life. These desires create expectations of fulfillment, and when they are not fulfilled, they create suffering and linger on within our body-mind system.

It will help you to realize that suffering itself is not an event in your life; it is actually only your response to an event.

Whether or not you suffer in a particular situation depends entirely upon your reaction to that situation. When do you undergo suffering? When you fall ill? When your neighbor's situation improves? When your partner leaves you for someone else?

Well, suppose you decided to just accept these situations without anger or resentment; just as they are, so be it. Would you still suffer as much?

Try to accept the *inevitability of the moment*, without reaction. It is *only* your negative response to an experience that allows it to hurt you. Don't you see: no one or nothing can make you suffer without your silent permission? When we have certain expectations or fantasies that aren't fulfilled, we suffer. If we don't learn from the situation and drop the expectations, we go on suffering.

Make a habit of witnessing experiences minus your personal judgment. Learn to recognize with clarity the causes of your suffering - the obvious and the subtle. The ability to do this will come, not in a day but certainly through practice.

One of the most deeply hidden reasons for suffering is that you could be enjoying it! For example, falling ill can become a source of pleasure if it brings you the attention and care you have been craving for. It can also be a means to escape a situation that is distasteful to you. Examine why it sometimes gives pleasure to inflict pain upon yourself or others.

Is there a better channel through which you can receive the same pleasure - without the suffering? Become aware - this is the first step. The second is to accept totally the here and now - without questions and without reaction.

Awareness with acceptance - this is the only way out of suffering.

The second part of the question is, 'is suffering essential?' Yes, in a way it is.

Suffering can be a powerful catalyst for growth. Just like a seed that has to first rupture before a plant can grow and blossom, intense suffering can break down the defenses of your ego, leaving you open and vulnerable to Existence.

With your usual thought patterns shattered, you begin to see things as they actually are. You begin to recognize a subtle distance between you and the pain - that it is not 'your' pain, that it is not something intrinsic to you. In fact, pain is simply the response you have chosen to that particular situation. And once you see that, how can you suffer any more? In consciously accepting your pain, you truly let go of it.

Suffering is not necessarily the key to bliss. But if you learn your lessons well, suffering can certainly open your eyes to the choice of suffering. It can teach you how unnecessary it is to suffer, and how you can move out of it.

This is what I call 'necessary suffering'! The suffering that teaches you that there is no need to suffer is what I call 'necessary suffering'.



## Senses And Sins

*3.14 All beings grow from food grains, from rains the food grains become possible, the rains become possible from selfless sacrifice.*

*3.15 Know that work is born of the Creator and He is born of the Supreme.*

*The all-pervading supreme is eternally situated in sacrifice.*

*3.16 O Partha, he who does not adopt the prescribed, established cycle lives a life full of sins.*

*Rejoicing in sense gratification, he lives a useless life.*

These concepts are beautiful concepts explained metaphorically. Great truths are conveyed in our scriptures in very few words because our masters did not depend on communication through words. They imparted knowledge by communion with the disciple.

So, this metaphorical explanation in a few verses actually has a deep meaning about life, about how we connect with life, how we depend on the universe, and how we affect the whole universe. Just this concept that Krishna explains in a few verses here is explained in detail in the Cāndogya Upaniṣad.

Our relationship with the activity of nature outside is a very deep one. Our actions are like oblations offered in a fire sacrifice. Our activities are not just movements of the limbs. When we perform a *yajña*, a fire sacrifice, we pour various offerings into the fire. We do so to tap the cosmic energy and to flow in tune with Existence, with nature.

The subtlest, most powerful and all-pervasive cosmic energy is invoked through the slightly less subtle air element when we chant the *mantra* and we connect to the still, less subtle fire energy through the fire ritual. Energy is then transferred to water, a grosser energy, and then the water in the pots is poured over plants, idols and humans as well as the earth, which is the grossest form of energy.

A physical action is a gross action, something that can be seen on the physical plane. Thoughts, mental actions, are subtler and they cannot be seen on the physical plane.

When we perform sacrifice, we perform certain invocations to the higher energies. So, we attract corresponding effects for our actions. Our actions are like offerings in a sacrifice. When the actions are in tune with the flow of Existence, it is like offering ghee (clarified butter) into the fire. When we do not flow in tune with Existence, it is like offering mud into the fire. You know what kind of smoke will come out of the fire when you offer ghee and what kind of smoke will come out when you offer mud. Like how from the quality of the smoke you can determine the quality of the offering you gave to the fire, the result of your actions can be determined from the quality of your actions.

The quality of the end result is based on our input, our offerings.

Krishna says that rains become possible from sacrifice. Rain is a grosser form of energy that is activated by the subtler energies, which are influenced by our actions, thoughts and vibrations.

Rain is the cause for the growth of food grains. Food is needed to sustain our bodies and minds, which give rise to further action.

So you see this cycle now, of how the subtle energy manifests itself in the grosser world and how the actions in the grosser world affect the subtler elements.

If we just understand this, we will realize that everything that we do and experience is caused by our own actions. We invite our destiny. As we sow, so shall we reap.

Our body-mind is highly influenced by our thoughts and words.

Bliss attracts fortune. You may wonder, 'Fortune can bring us bliss but how can bliss bring us fortune?'

In India, when any new activity is started, be it a business or construction or something to do with education, the first thing that we do is sit down for a few

moments, close our eyes and remain in a meditative mood. We try to bring about some kind of an energy play or transformation inside us.

Of course, over the years, this has become a prayer and a ritual. That is a different issue. But the first thing that we do is sit down and try to kindle the energy flow in us.

When the energy flow in us becomes harmonious, it has the property of influencing external incidents. Whether you believe it or not, accept it or not, like it or not, want it or not, you are deeply connected to Existence. You are an integral part of Existence, not an independent island as you think.

Every subtle movement or subtle thought in one part of the universe causes a counter-effect at that same moment elsewhere in the universe.

Our thoughts and energy flow have the capacity to create and attract incidents and people of the same nature.

What I have said here is one of the age-old truths expounded by our ṛṣis, sages in the *Upaniṣad*, *vedic* lore. It is interesting that modern science is coming up with some startling evidence that reveals some of these truths now.

You should know about this research conducted by Dr. Masaru Emoto, a Japanese doctor and research scientist who has published his findings in the book, *The Hidden Messages in Water*. He conducted extensive experiments on water samples taken from all over the world.

He took similar samples of water and exposed the water to different influences. To one set of samples, he spoke positive words such as 'love' and 'gratitude'. He recited Buddhist chants to another. Over another set, he spoke words such as 'anger' and 'war'. Then he froze the different water samples so that he could photograph their crystal form.

In the samples that had been exposed to positive energy, beautiful clear crystals were formed, like diamonds! The water exposed to negative energies did not form into crystals; they looked like a tumor: dark, cloudy and without any distinct geometrical pattern.

Several hundred experiments were conducted to prove the effects of the vibrations created by our words and thoughts on matter. Water being the most common molecule in our bodies, we can now see the obvious and dramatic effect

our thoughts have on ourselves and others! It doesn't stop there. Our thoughts have the capacity to affect the oceans and the seas.

Recent research by Russian scientists throw an entirely new light on how our DNA can be influenced and reprogrammed by words and frequencies. They did experiments where they superimposed certain frequencies onto a laser ray and with it influenced the DNA frequency and thus the genetic information itself!

In quantum physics, there is a notion of a wormhole that is essentially like a shortcut in space-time. It is like a tube that can connect two distant locations in the universe by bending space-time. By going from one end to the other through the wormhole, one can travel from one point in the universe to another without going through the usual space-time. One can even access parallel universes if the two ends of the wormhole are in different universes.

Russian scientists showed that wormholes could be built into the DNA, so that information can be transmitted outside of space and time. The DNA attracts these bits of information and passes them on to our consciousness. They give this explanation for the process of hyper-communication or what we call intuition.

Science is beginning to touch what our *vedic* seers have declared thousands of years ago about collective consciousness. What we do in any plane, physical or mental, affects our consciousness. And since we are all a part of the common fabric called Existence, our consciousness is a part of the collective consciousness, which also gets affected by our thoughts and actions.

Weather is strongly influenced by earth resonance frequencies, and the same frequencies are also produced in our brains. When many people synchronize their thinking, the individual consciousness synchronizes and affects the collective consciousness. So we can actually even influence the weather by our thoughts.

This is what Krishna means when He says rains are caused by sacrifice. It is a metaphorical statement. When a large number of people synchronize and focus their thoughts with no expectations and with full faith in the abundance of the universe, the universe responds. Rain falls, grains grow, and abundance results.

It has actually been revealed by various studies that when a number of people focus their thoughts on something similar, like during communal celebrations or a football world championship, then certain random number generators in computers start to deliver ordered numbers instead of random ones!

Also understand, that all the so-called natural calamities are nothing but the effects of global negative thoughts.



From a young age, we have been trained in 'mathematical logic', never in 'Existential logic'. Mathematical logic is very straightforward and should be applied only to things where it is appropriate. In matters concerning life and relationships, mathematical logic will only cause chaos. With it, we will always look to conclude with a 'good' or 'bad' judgment. There is something beyond and deeper than this - and that is Existential logic. This comes with a mature understanding and flowering from within.

Your thoughts and energy directly affect your body, your cell structure, your decisions, your capacity to fulfill your decisions, the outer world incidents, and even accidents.

Currently, you are always centered in either greed or fear. Every action that you do is out of either desire or fear. It becomes very easy for others to exploit you because of this. You become very vulnerable. You create a mental setup that attracts similar incidents to your life. You also corrupt your energy flow in this way.

If you can change your mental setup from this type to one of bliss, or *ānanda*, then your energy flow will start brimming and your thoughts will be much clearer and you will be more in the present moment.

When you do this, you have every power to control external incidents because you and Existence have a very deep connection at the energy level. This is the thread that you need to catch in order to understand that bliss attracts fortune. When you are blissful, when your mental setup is not one of worry, fear and greed but one that is in the present, always joyful, you will automatically attract all good things to yourself.

When you throw a pebble into a lake, ripples start from that point to the edge of the lake. So also your thoughts have a permanent effect on the universe. Imagine if the lake were infinite. Ripples with a continuous effect would be created, even though the magnitude of each ripple would be different.

So also every action has an effect. Using the same principle, I can say that you can actually create the desired effect by just visualizing it. For example, if you meditate, if you visualize you *are* bliss, bliss is bound to happen in and around you as an effect. It would seem that the cause has created the effect. But in life, cause and effect are actually a cycle, each generating and being generated by the other.

This is the endless cycle that Krishna refers to when He says that work originates with the Creator, who in turn originates from the supreme Existence, and therefore all sacrifices are from the Supreme to the Supreme.

When we are in the mood and mode of surrender, we no longer retain our identity. We are one with Existence. Whatever we do, we do by Existence and for Existence. There is no separation.

**Q: Swamiji, how can we surrender the ego when this wanting to surrender is itself an expression of the ego?**

A question to you: How are you going to surrender the ego, when it does not exist?

Suppose you are sitting in a dark room. You want the darkness to go out. Can you push it out? Can you fight darkness and force it to leave the room? No! No matter how long you keep trying, you are ultimately going to be defeated – and that too by something which does not exist!

Ego is like darkness; it has no positive existence. Just like darkness is simply the absence of light, ego is nothing but the absence of awareness. To struggle to kill the ego is like struggling to push darkness out of the room.

To really expel darkness, what you need to do is *forget all about* dealing with darkness. Focus your energy on light instead. Just bring a small lamp into the room, and you will find that the darkness has fled on its own!

So, I tell you to forget all about the ego. Instead, focus on bringing a lamp of awareness into your being. Bring the light of your consciousness to your unconscious zone. When your entire consciousness has become a flame, you will find that the ego is no more.

Ego is an illusion. You cannot surrender it when you are unaware – because you don't know how. Of course, you cannot surrender it when you become aware either - because then you realize that there is nothing left to surrender!

What you have heard, read, been taught – 'Surrender the ego in order to attain self-realization' – is an utterly impractical idea. It can happen *only* the other way round. Self-realization dawns, and suddenly you cannot find the ego anymore. Surrender has already happened, just like that.

However, I am glad that the question has arisen in your being. Ego is the root cause for all your anxieties, sorrows and tensions. It is your doorway to hell. To actively feel that you want to drop the ego, to feel the need to get rid of this burden is in itself a step towards awareness. It shows that you are stirring from your sleep!



## Acting Without Attachment

*3.17 One who takes pleasure in the Self, who is satisfied in the Self and who is content in his own Self, for him certainly, no work exists.*

*3.18 Certainly, he never has any reason for doing his duty or not doing his duty in this world.*

*He does not depend on any living being.*

*3.19 Therefore, one should work always without attachment.*

*Performing work without attachment, certainly, man achieves the Supreme.*

*3.20 King Janaka and others attained perfection by selfless service.*

*To guide others, you too must act selflessly.*

Our Eastern masters have declared again and again, 'You *are* bliss. You are love. You are eternal bliss itself.' When you are bliss itself, what more can you ask for? When you understand and experience this truth, you are enough unto yourself; you are completely satisfied and enjoying yourself. Then nothing exists for you to achieve because you are already the ultimate thing you can achieve!

As of now, you are running behind something out of greed, thinking that when you achieve that, when you possess that, it will give you bliss. Either you are running behind something out of greed or you are running away from something out of fear. You are afraid that something will take away your joy, your life.

Both these, running towards something and away from something, become irrelevant when you understand that you are a part of this loving Existence which is taking care of you every moment.

Existence is taking care of you every moment. Do you think you can be alive even for one moment if Existence does not want you to be alive? The very fact that you are alive proves that Existence wants you here, now, in this form, in this place. This is the ultimate cause for celebration! What more do you want?

Existence has provided, is providing and will provide for each and every one of your needs. Your suffering and struggle is only because you don't trust that you are being provided all that you need, because you consider yourself separate from Existence, who you think is your enemy.

People often look at my feet and tell me that I have such smooth and soft feet. They do not know that I have wandered thousands of miles with no footwear in all possible types of terrain, from the Himalayas in the north to Kanyakumari in the south, from Dwaraka in the west to Ganga Sagar in the east. Understand, when you walk upon mother earth with great respect and love, She will simply cherish you.

I have never worn footwear in my early years of life. Even now when I enter Tiruvannamalai, where I was born and where I grew up, I don't wear footwear. From childhood I never wore footwear in that town. When I used to go to college by bus, I used to put on the shoes only after the bus left the Tiruvannamalai town, and would take them off when it entered the town again. It is a holy land that one must fall in tune with. Many of our followers take off their shoes when they are in this town.

Once I was on an elephant safari on a jungle path. The guide showed me a path, which was used by humans, alongside the one on which the elephant was walking. The guide's path had no grass on it. The guide said that where man walks, no grass grows, but where the elephant walks, the grass does not die!

As humans we have lost touch with nature, with Existence. We have fallen out of tune with ourselves and with nature. That is why we experience nature unpleasantly. Even in our prayers there is no gratitude, there is only asking. We have become beggars.

Also, you are not satisfied with how Existence chooses to take care of your needs. You look at others and have a big list of wants based on what others have.

You fail to understand that each of us is unique and each of us has been provided with exactly what we need. Instead, you start looking at what others have and want that also. Greed sets in.

This is how you waste your entire life running behind desires and running away from reality. We are focused only on the outer world. Our joys and sorrows are a result of this. As long as the outer world is responsible for your happiness, there can be no permanent happiness.

The person who is centered does not depend on external causes for enjoyment. He does not depend on other people to feel blissful. He does not need some particular event to happen to feel joyful. Constantly, the fountain of bliss is happening within him. He is enjoying within himself. He *is* enjoyment itself!

Actually, the fountain of bliss is happening spontaneously in each and every one of us. When I say it is spontaneously happening, I mean that it is happening without any reason.

We always think that joy or happiness can happen only for some reason. On the other hand, we feel we can be sad for no reason! Just like that, for no reason, you can be morose, sad, thinking, 'What is this life all about?' But you always feel you need some reason to be happy.

It is you who is making all the effort to stop the fountain of bliss that is happening in your being every moment. The first level meditation program, Ananda Spurana Program, (Life Bliss Program Level 1) which deals with the seven *cakras*, the seven energy centers in our body, is all about 'stopping the stopping' of the fountain of bliss. The second level program, Nithyananda Spurana Program (LBP Level 2) reinforces this and shows you how to keep this fountain of bliss happening eternally in you.

Here Krishna says a beautiful thing:

King Janaka was a beautiful example of a true *karma yogi*, a man of continuous and selfless action. He was a king. He ruled a kingdom and yet was unattached, liberated. Just like Krishna who ruled a kingdom and yet was a *sanyāsi* in the truest sense of the word, Janaka was a model king who was untouched by the external world.

Once, an ascetic went to the court of King Janaka and saw how Janaka was neck-deep in the activities of his kingdom, living like a king. He then thought to himself, 'Janaka seems to be a materialistic person. He is entrapped in so many worldly matters.'

Janaka understood what the ascetic was thinking. Janaka called him and asked him, 'What kind of an ascetic are you? Instead of being happy and content within yourself you are trying to find fault with others? This is a grave sin especially for an ascetic, a person who is supposed to know about these things. For this, I have to give you the most severe punishment. You will be hanged to death next week.'

Now, the ascetic was terrified. He could not sit in peace. He spent sleepless nights thinking of the gallows. He dreamt daily that his neck was being tied to a rope. He became very thin and pale.

Janaka sent a servant to call him on the day of the execution. The ascetic was unable to stand before the king. He trembled and fell on the ground. Janaka offered him some fruits and a cup of milk. He ate the food, but his mind was on the gallows.

Janaka asked him, 'How do you like the taste of the milk now? Is it good? Did you relish your food these past seven days?'

The ascetic replied, 'Oh king! I did not feel any taste in the food or milk that you offered me just now. My mind is only on the gallows all the time. I see only gallows everywhere.'

Janaka said, 'Just as your mind is always on the gallows, so also my mind is always fixed on the Divine, though I am involved in worldly activities discharging my duties as a king. Though I am in this world, I am out of the world. Work for the world, unattached like myself.'

Janaka, though neck-deep in the activities related to the administration of his kingdom, was completely unattached, liberated.

Once, Janaka was brought news that there was a fire in the city. Ordinarily, a king would have been agitated that part of his kingdom was in flames, and in danger.

But Janaka said, 'My wealth is unlimited and yet I have nothing. Even if the whole of my capital Mithila is burnt, nothing is lost to me.'

It is not that Janaka was not bothered that there was a fire in his kingdom. He was completely involved in what he had to do, but at the same time was completely detached from the incident. He was centered on his being, not on the world.

And I tell you, only when you are completely detached can you be completely involved. Otherwise, your very sense of ownership and emotional attachment will be a hindrance to plunging headlong into the task. Only when you remain without internalizing the incident can you perform the task in the best way, without expectation and without being concerned about the results.

*Q: Swamiji, whenever I am in your presence, all questions disappear and everything seems possible. But when I am away from you, all the familiar doubts creep in. Why does this happen and what can I do about it?*

If a question disappears on its own in my presence, then it is time to realize that it was not a true question at all. It was merely a play of the mind.

When you are with me, mind is no more in control - you simply flow into meditation. You become a loving, serene silence. In this state, only a question that is truly *your* question, one that is completely relevant to you, will still remain with you.

In my presence, you become so intensely aware, so completely present that there is no space for questions to arise. When you leave my presence, the mind is free to impose the past and the future upon your present - for what else are your questions but the play of the past and the future upon your present?

Just like the ego, there is no point in fighting with or condemning the mind. It is a pointless struggle that you will be sure to lose. Instead, it is enough to be aware that this is the very nature of the mind. It can be expected to behave in no other way. It is bound to bring in anxiety, confusion and doubt.

Just to be conscious of this is enough. Do not pass judgment on the mind. Even to be angry with your mind is to lose your energy to it.

As you witness the workings of the mind, you will slowly become aware that you are not the mind - you are more than the mind, you are the watcher. Slowly, in place of the chaos of thoughts that you call your mind, a clear, intense consciousness arises. At that moment, all questions dissolve and the mind is no more. This is the experience you find yourself having in my presence. And what I have just told you is the way to make it stay with you always - even when you are not with me! It is a slow process; give it time. It will happen.



## Leadership Consciousness

*3.21 Whenever action is performed by a great person, others follow.*

*They follow the example set by him.*

*3.22 O Partha, there is nothing that I must do in the three worlds.*

*Neither am I in want of anything. Yet, I am always in action.*

*3.23 If I did not engage in work with care, O Partha, certainly, people would follow My path in all respects.*

*3.24 If I do not work, then these worlds would be ruined. I would be the cause of creating confusion and destruction.*

*3.25 Even the ignorant do their work with attachment to the results, O Bharata, the wise do so without attachment, for the welfare of the people.*

Here, Krishna talks about the practical aspects of why a leader needs to act in a responsible manner.

There is a difference between the state of a leader and the status of a leader. Most of us want to attain the status of a leader but not the state. When you achieve the status of the leader, it is ego-fulfilling and you feel great. Most politicians are great examples of this status. They exert the power of their position on others.

Understand how they got that position of power first. They were a little more dominating and a little more convincing than the people whom they were trying to



dominate, that's all. It is not that they were more intelligent or more capable. They had greater strength of conviction, whatever it was about, and they were more energetic in convincing others about their conviction. Or probably, because there was no one else to fill in the place, they became the leader!

The *state* of the leader is something totally different. It is the state of the leader that affects people, whether it is people under a political leader or people in an organization in the corporate world under a CEO. Problems of all kinds, ranging from stress to discontentment and violence, result because the leader has achieved the status and not the state.

I always tell my disciples, 'Practice what I teach you. Don't just preach what I teach. Only by example can you inspire others to follow you.' It is easy to utter words and talk about what you have understood intellectually from my teachings, but that understanding is very shallow.

Deep understanding happens only with experience. Only when it becomes your own experience does the understanding become complete. Then you are unshakeable in your conviction. Otherwise, if the understanding is just based on words, it is based on somebody else's experience and not on your own. Then there is always the possibility that somebody can come and shake your belief. The roots of conviction, in this case, are not deep and strong enough to withstand all kinds of questions.

There are three types of people: the disciples (or the followers), the masters, and the leaders (or guides).

The disciple is one who has not yet experienced the teachings of the masters but who is interested and has embarked upon the path. He needs some guidance on the path. He does not yet know how to practice what is being taught.

The master is one who has had and is in the ultimate experience. He is already in the ultimate state. Out of compassion, he shows the path to reach his state to all those who would like to be in that state. It is not necessary for the master to practice what he preaches because he is beyond the common rules of conduct.

A small story:

Once, there was a Zen master who used to advise people not to smoke. But he himself used to smoke everyday.

One day, a disciple asked him, 'Master, how can you tell people that they should not smoke when you yourself are smoking?'

The master replied beautifully, 'Understand, I am not in the same state, the same plane, as the person whom I am teaching.'

Masters are not in the same plane as the followers or the leaders. They need not follow what they tell you to do to reach their state, because they are in a completely different state altogether. They understand the illusion of the physical plane that their body-mind system operates in. Whatever they may do physically is in a state of complete awareness.

I always tell people, they need to be aware and completely present when they eat. But if you have been around me, you will see that I never concentrate on my food when I eat. When I eat, I will be reading something or talking to someone.

It is like this: For you, you have to meditate to be aware of the food you are consuming, so that you eat only as much as is needed and not more as you usually do. But for me, if I am aware, I will not be able to eat the amount of food my body needs. I have to distract myself and remove the awareness and only then the food will go inside! An enlightened being's system is very different from an ordinary person's system. That is why things that apply for ordinary people cannot be applied to an enlightened being.

A leader or guide is someone who is in between the master and the follower. He has not yet reached the ultimate state of the master but he has had glimpses of that state. He is not as inexperienced as the follower. He is the bridge to lead the follower to the master. I always tell the teachers of the mission that it is their responsibility to practice what they teach because they are the bridges leading the people they teach to come to me.

One more thing: It is not that you need to practice just so that others get inspired. Understand that the very practice will give deep understanding to you. That is the first effect, the actual result. Being an inspiration to others will be just a byproduct. It will result automatically from the confidence that you radiate in your body language and words when you teach people out of the strength of your own conviction.

In these verses, Krishna beautifully explains what walking the talk means through His own example. He says there is nothing in the three worlds, the

nether-world, earth or heaven, for Him to achieve. There is no duty that binds Him. Even though He has nothing to gain, lose or even to do, He is constantly engaged in action. Why?

Because people look up to Him as God, they would obviously follow the path He sets. They would simply follow what He does. He is now responsible for leading them on the correct path.

So even though He Himself has no reason to engage in work, He does so for the sake of the people who will follow Him. If He did not engage in action, people would follow His example and fall into inaction or *tamas*.

Every year, I take people to the Himalayan mountains. The Himalayas are an energy field; they are living energy. It is a lifetime experience to be in the lap of nature, to be in the amazing energy field there. It can be a tremendous inspiration, a powerful transformation just seeing and living life in the Himalayas for fifteen days.

In the Himalayas, we do various types of rituals at various places, at the *cār dhām* (the four sacred pilgrimage centers in that area). Of what use are the rituals to me? But I do them for you so that you understand their significance and you get inspired to do them and benefit from them.

After enlightenment, I came from the Himalayas to be amidst the people. I could have just stayed there happily and blissfully. But I have come here because people need to be guided on the right path. That is why masters come to planet earth - to guide people.

Seeing me work constantly, being intensely involved in work, whether it is administration or giving discourses or planning upcoming activities or healing people or teaching, whatever the action may be, people are inspired to be engaged in work constantly, blissfully enjoying every moment.

I don't have to give you my words. You can see me and learn from my body language much more than from my words. I give you words only to silence your mind so that you can absorb my energy. Otherwise, if I don't talk, you will be chattering inside yourself and will miss my message.

As Krishna says, I need to be careful what I do for the sake of those who follow.

The problem is, what I do is my experience. It is an expression of my experience. Unless you experience it yourself, it cannot become your truth. So the same action will have a completely different meaning and effect when done by a disciple than when done by a master. But if you follow the master's teachings and watch his body language, you will imbibe enlightenment itself.

For example, look at a simple teaching by Buddha, 'Watch your breath.' This very simple *vipāśana* meditation technique has led thousands of people to enlightenment.

But look at a seemingly powerful discovery of the principle behind the atom bomb: the nuclear fission. It was a great truth, but when it came into the hands of an ignorant person who did not understand the implications of it, it resulted in so many countries piling up so many atomic weapons that the earth can now be destroyed several times over!

It is the energy behind the action, the energy of the being that decides the quality and hence, the effect of the action. It is not the action itself that decides the quality.

You must have seen that there are some people who can get away with anything, even something that would normally appear as a disrespectful action. But somehow, the action does not hurt people. It is because there was no negative attitude or vengeance behind the act.

Children get away with so many things like even hitting you, and you actually enjoy it rather than feel hurt or insulted. Can you imagine feeling like this if an adult hits you? The innocence of the child and the honest simplicity of the child's act is what that makes even the act of hitting beautiful. The energy of the child, its intelligence, is completely behind the action. This is unlike an adult whose intellect may be behind the act, the mind is behind the act, but the intelligence is not there because there is a certain unconscious vengeance in the act.

Masters act out of pure compassion in whatever they do. That is why so often, even when I scold people, the person does not carry vengeance towards me. Scolding is also for your good, for your ego to be removed. It will seem painful because the ego, which you have been thinking is you, is being pulled out. But your being understands that it is for your good that what is not you is being removed. There is pure compassion even in scolding. That is why in the very next

moment after scolding, I can be completely different, showering love. There was no vengeance to hold onto in that act of scolding. It was just complete truth at that moment, pure compassionate energy. That is why it can switch to loving emotion the very next minute. Every instance is pure in its own way.

But what happens when you get angry with someone and scold him, say your child? The anger takes you over. Instead of you controlling the anger, *it* controls you and you misuse it because you are not conscious during the action.

You are driven by your past perceptions, by your memories of similar incidents in the past when your child did not behave as you expected, and you react with more anger than his current act deserves. Anger is also energy but you need to handle it with respect. Just like you respect money and hence you never pay someone more than necessary, when you realize the power of the anger energy, you respect it and do not pay the other person more anger than necessary.

If you give just the right anger energy, it can be transformational, but your negative attitude behind the action creates an undesired result and the person carries a certain vengeance towards you which even he may not be conscious of.

Be very clear, the other person's vengeance is the result of your very own vengeance, which you did not realize was there in your own action because you were not completely aware when you were scolding.

I always tell people, 'When I am compassionate, I cheat you. When I scold you, I teach you. Either way, you grow.' When I scold you, you are jolted into the present moment. Suddenly, in a flash, you get the awareness that you have been missing. The energy behind my words is purely for your transformation. There is only pure compassion. There is no vengeance against anyone or any vested interest for myself.

***Q: Swamiji, in India we are brought up to follow rituals and idol worship. Are you for or against these?***

First of all, I am neither for nor against idol worship or rituals – or anything, for that matter!

But there is a reason why idol worship is so common in India and elsewhere in the East. For a beginner on the spiritual journey, it is difficult to conceive of the

Divine in the abstract. When given a form, the concept is crystallized into something he understands and can relate to.

With an idol, he can commune with the Divine in the language that he is familiar with. Our thousands of deities are nothing but expressions of the Divine. And yet anyone can talk to them, pray to or play with them, seek solace or offer gratitude. The whole awesome, indefinable nature of the Divine is scaled down to comforting proportions in the form of the deity. It has to be this way; the Divine without form is simply too terrifying a concept for the ordinary mind.

At a deeper, subtler level, there is one more message being reinforced - the idol before you is cast in the same form as yours, and yet it is divine. What does that say about *you*? Think about it. It says that you too are divine!

If you are an idol worshipper, there is no need to condemn yourself.

As you grow spiritually, you will find yourself able to commune with the Divine just as well without an idol. Just as children stop playing with dolls once they grow older, you will drop the idols of your own accord when the time comes. But right now if it gives you a sense of wellbeing to worship your favorite deity, do so by all means.

Spirituality is a vast, shoreless ocean. When you are just learning to swim, it certainly helps your confidence to hold onto a lifebuoy, something you can be sure of, something that won't let you down. As you grow stronger and surer, you will naturally shake off its hold and enter the deep waters, freely and fearlessly.

As for rituals, it has been scientifically proved that certain colors, sounds and actions can deeply impact your state of mind, activate desired areas of the brain, and expand your consciousness. Rituals have lost their credibility today only because their true meaning has been lost upon the masses over time. Only the shell of ritual remains; the spirit has departed.

So even if they seem irrelevant to you today, never underestimate the true potential of rituals. Rituals are the distillation of centuries of wisdom and the penance of innumerable enlightened masters. When performed in the proper way, rituals have tremendous power to bring about unimaginable levels of awareness and change within us.

In the ashram, you may often find me performing *pūjā* (worship) and *yāga* (fire ritual). The fact is, these mean nothing to me. I don't need a channel to commune with the Divine. These are for the people.

These are done to draw people into a familiar territory, a space where they feel secure and tranquil. In an atmosphere that years of worship have sanctified, bowing before your beloved deities and listening to the chanting of well-known *mantras*, a silent, meditative state is naturally induced in you.

At this time you are completely open and surrendered, receptive to my energy. This is the time when I can truly work upon you, without your intellect and without your resistance. Can you understand me now?

Of course, I have never given up being a child, and so I perfectly enjoy my play with these dolls, these deities - but that is another matter!



## Role Of The Wise

*3.26 Let not the wise disturb the minds of the ignorant who are attached to the results of work.*

*They should encourage them to act without attachment.*

*3.27 People, confused by ego, think they are the doers of all kinds of work while it is being done by the energy of nature.*

*3.28 One who knows the Truth, O mighty-armed one, knows the divisions existing in the attributes of nature and work.*

*Knowing well about the attributes and sense gratification, he never becomes attached.*

*3.29 Fooled by the attributes of nature, those people with less wisdom or who are lazy become engaged in actions driven by these attributes.*

*But, the wise should not unsettle them.*

An ignorant man says to himself, 'I shall do this action and thereby enjoy its result.' A wise man should not unsettle this belief. Instead, he himself should set an example by performing his duties diligently but without attachment. If the wise man condemns the actions performed with attachment, the ignorant person may simply decide to neglect his duties.

It is like this. Can you explain to a child that his toys are not precious? No! The child will never be able to understand that. It has to grow and automatically its attachment to toys will drop when maturity happens. Similarly, the ignorant person



can first do the action only with attachment. But upon seeing the wise person being unaffected by his own actions and being always blissful, naturally, the ignorant one will get curious and want to know the secret behind happiness. The example of the wise man will automatically pull him towards work with detachment.

Take the example of relating to God. Most of us pray to God to get something. All our prayers to God are asking for this, asking for that, asking God to fulfill some desire or to protect us from something. It is okay to start a relationship with God like this. It is perfectly alright. When you get what you asked for, your trust grows and you start feeling gratitude towards Him. This is important.

In the beginning, it is very difficult to feel grateful to God for all that has been given to you. So if you ask a person who has not eaten food for three days to meditate, will he be able to? No! His needs are different. You will be foolish, not wise, if you try telling this person to meditate. What he needs now is some means to get food and then he can be told about meditation.

Many people ask me, 'God is everywhere. Then, why do we have to pray? Why do we have to go to temples? Why do we have to do rituals?' To reach the state of understanding that 'God is everywhere', if you start by just saying this and not doing anything, then you will only be fooling yourself.

Loving the world is easy; loving your wife is difficult! It is easy to say you love the whole world because you don't have to do anything to prove it. But to love your wife, you have to do something tangible to prove it. So if you sit and tell yourself that you have reached the ultimate truth, you are actually trying to escape from the effort needed to reach it, from the steps needed to realize it.

When a person is doing work and expecting certain results, the wise person should not go and disturb him, even though he knows that work should not be done with attachment. At least the person is working and not sitting idle! He is in *rajas* (aggressive activity), which is better than *tamas* (laziness). Of course, he needs to be guided from *rajas* to *satva*, a state of calmness born out of detached action, action without expectations. That is the job of a master.

We are all governed by our basic nature, attributes, or *guṇa*, as they are termed in the Sanskrit language. These attributes are defined by the kind of life we have led, in this and past lives. The mental set-up or the essence of the mind, called *vāśana*, carries over from birth to birth and determines what we are and what we do in this birth. We create this mindset by our actions in past births. So in a sense,

we do determine what happens to us in our future births. This mindset determines our nature, our attributes.

The desires born out of *vāśana* carry their own energy for fulfillment. If you are conscious of your *vāśana*, you will be able to fulfill them. Once fulfilled, these *vāśana* and *karma* get dissolved. One who reaches this state of awareness of fulfilled desires also realizes that he is not the doer.

The potter's wheel goes on turning around even after the potter has ceased to turn it when the pot is finished. In the same way, the electric fan goes on revolving for a few minutes even after we switch off the electricity. The *vāśana* or desires with which you took this body and mind will make the body-mind go through whatever activities it was made for. But the wise person goes through all these activities without the notion that he is the doer of them.

Actually, your desire to lead life in a particular way is what creates the corresponding mental setup. You are the one who chooses to live life in a particular way, and once you decide this, your body supports this decision and acts accordingly. You create a mental setup to aid you in living life the way you desire. This mental setup that you create to live life in a particular way is your *vāśana*, or the seed of *karma*.

You are the one who chooses, but any choice comes with effects and side-effects. Sometimes when you see the side-effects, you feel that you don't want this way of life. It is too costly; it is creating more unwanted effects than you were expecting. Then you say what you are getting is due to fate or destiny. Actually, you are the one who chose it in the first place.

A small story:

Once a man went to a restaurant and ordered various items: hamburgers, steaks, pasta, drinks, ice cream, and so on. He had a hearty meal and relaxed. The waiter brought the bill.

The man took a look at the long bill and exclaimed, 'But didn't order for this bill!'

When you eat, you don't think about the bill, but the bill comes only as a result of all that you ate in the restaurant. You don't have to order for the bill separately. Similarly, in life, all that you undergo are the effects of your own actions. You are not aware of what those effects can be and therefore you perform the actions unconsciously.

To understand, 'I am not the doer', this concept of 'I' and 'mine' needs to be understood. Shiva says that the concept of 'I' itself comes from the concept of 'mine'. We always think it is the other way around. We think, when the sense of 'I' happens, the sense of 'mine' happens. But if you look deeply, our idea of what we think of as 'ours' is what defines what we think of as ourselves. Just imagine, if your possessions, your status, your wealth, your relations all are taken away from you, what will you think of as you? How will you define yourself? Your idea of 'I' is also relative, is it not?

There is a recent theory in quantum physics called 'string theory' which says that the universe is made up fundamentally of strings of an extremely small scale, which vibrate at particular frequencies. So an object is not a particle but a vibration; energy vibrating in different modes. The different modes appear as different particles.

Many devotees feel that they are just touching a soft pillow when I embrace them during *Ānanda Darśan* (transfer of bliss energy). Sometimes they feel nothing and they are shocked. Basically, enlightened beings are just energy. In this plane, in these dimensions of space-time, you see them in this form. You see them in this six-foot form as say 'Nithyananda', but in truth, this 'Nithyananda' does not exist. It is just energy. There is no 'I'.

When you get attached to anything, when you internalize external incidents, you start creating suffering for yourself. When you understand that it is the mind and the senses doing what is in their nature, you become detached from your body-mind and do things with the clear understanding that what is happening is just the mind, body and senses doing their job.

When you don't understand this, you get caught in what you are doing, you get emotionally attached to incidents and people, and you start living without awareness because your energy is being wasted in getting stressed out and getting emotionally upset over things.

**Q: Swamiji, can you explain the concept of *karma*?**

Let me give you an idea about *karma*.

Whenever an action has been started, but not fulfilled, there exists a force that pulls you to fulfill it, to bring it to completion. This force is *karma*. Whatever you

have tasted, desired but not experienced totally, will continuously draw you to repeat that very experience until you experience fulfillment.

You will keep repeating that action till you actually *become* that experience, because you *are* fulfillment. You enter the body just to fulfill this action. In the course of fulfillment you meet all these things, these 'troubles'.

This is the explanation that I give for *karma*. All other words – 'It is because of my bad *karma* that I got this disease,' or 'It is because of my good *karma* that I met Swamiji' – all these are just things we say after the event has happened.

Whatever happens, we give it the name *karma*.

The word *karma* is much misunderstood. I am not giving you an explanation for *karma* as one understands it normally. I don't accept *karma* to be fate or destiny as people call it. I don't mean it as cause and effect.

According to my experience, there is no such thing as fate or destiny. The future is left completely open by Existence. It is we who decide.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa tells a beautiful story that will give you intellectual clarity on the subject. Of course, no one can give you existential and experiential clarity on *karma* as it really is – that clarity comes only with enlightenment. And when you are enlightened, you cannot express it!

Ramakrishna explains *karma* this way:

For example: Imagine a cow tied to a post with a five-meter rope. Within that perimeter it can sit, stand, feed, do whatever it pleases, but it is not free to move beyond that limit. Our life is just the same. We have a limited amount of freedom; the rest is in the hands of Existence. But Ramakrishna also adds, if we use our five-meter freedom intelligently, it is possible that Existence may extend our rope, or even free us completely. That depends on both, the master and us. You can choose whether to remain in bondage or work towards being set free.

Someone once asked me, 'What if the cow learns to bite and break the rope?'

First of all, do you know where the rope is? To which limb it is tied? Where it begins and ends? Where to bite? How to bite? With an ordinary cow and rope, the cow can see these things. You people don't even know what or where your rope is! So what I can give you is only a glimpse, an inspiration to enter into the experience! The rest you will know as it happens.



## Do As I Teach

*3.30 Dedicating the results of work to Me, with consciousness filled with spiritual knowledge, without desire for gain and without sense of ownership, without being lazy, do what you have to do.*

*3.31 Those persons who execute their duties according to My injunctions and who follow these teachings faithfully, without envy, become free from the bondage of actions.*

*3.32 But those who do not regularly perform their duties according to My teaching, are ignorant, senseless and ruined.*

Next Krishna makes an important point. He clarifies one more point.

Krishna says: Those persons who execute their duties according to My injunctions and who follow this teaching faithfully, without envy, become free from the bondage of actions.

Here you need to understand two things. He says, 'according to My injunctions'. It means that when you enter into your being, whatever your being says is Krishna's words. When he says My injunctions, He means the injunctions from the *ātman*, injunctions from the being.

When you drop the goals and fall into your being, the Divine will guide you. You will be guided by nature. You will be guided by God Himself and you will become an instrument in His hands.

If you become a hollow bamboo without any blockages inside, you will become a flute in the hands of Krishna. Dropping your purposes or dropping your ego is what I call becoming a hollow bamboo. If you become a hollow bamboo, you will become a flute in the hands of Krishna.

If you are a solid bamboo, you will be used only to carry dead bodies. In India, bamboo poles are used only to carry dead bodies. But if you drop the ego and fall into the being, you will become an instrument in the hands of the Divine; you will become a divine flute.

When you become a flute, the air that enters into you comes out as music. In the same way, when you become an instrument in the hands of the Divine, the air that enters into you comes out as *śāstra* or *mantra* or music. Whatever comes out of you becomes Divine. Your words become *mantra* (sacred words), your actions become *tantra* (sacred techniques), and your form becomes *yantra* (sacred form).

The moment you drop the ego, your words become *mantra* or sacred words to guide people. Your form becomes a *yantra* or sacred form to be meditated upon, your actions become *tantra*, or techniques to realize the Divine, and you become Divine.

If you carry your ego like a solid bamboo, you can use it only to carry a dead body!

Now it is up to you whether to become a hollow bamboo and become a flute in the hands of Krishna, or to be a solid bamboo and carry the dead body to the cremation ground.

Here, He says, 'Those persons who execute their duties according to My injunctions, according to your inner consciousness...' Please be very clear, as long as you follow the goals set by society, you will be carrying a social conscience. The moment you drop social conditioning, the purposes taught to you by society, you will drop conscience and start living with consciousness.

Social conscience is different, spiritual consciousness is different. If you live with goals, you will carry a social conscience in your life. If you realize the beauty of purposelessness you will carry spiritual consciousness in your life.

'The man who lives according to his consciousness, believing in and having *śraddhā* (faith) towards these teachings...' Why does Krishna ask for *śraddhā* here? This is the first time Krishna says '*śraddhā*'. Why?

Of course, the word *śraddhā* cannot really be translated as faith. Faith is a very poor word for *śraddhā*. In English, there is no equivalent word for *śraddhā*.

*Śraddhā* does not mean just faith. It means faith plus the courage to execute the idea. The courage to experiment with the idea is what is called *śraddhā*. Here Krishna says, '*śraddhāvanto anasūyanto*,' the man who executes the teachings with *śraddhā*, with the courage to follow. Why do we need courage to follow?

A small story:

A man born blind goes to the doctor and asks, 'Doctor, will you help me gain my eyesight?' The doctor says, 'Don't worry, I will perform an operation. You will get your vision and after that you can walk without your stick.'

Blind people always carry a stick to feel their way around. The doctor tells him that he will be able to walk without the stick.

The blind man asks, 'Doctor, I understand you will do an operation. I understand I will have my eyesight restored. But I don't understand how I can walk without the stick. How can I walk without my stick?'

By and by, the blind man had forgotten that stick was just an aid. He had started thinking that the stick was necessary even just to walk. But until the operation is done, until he gets his eyesight and experiences the truth that the stick is no longer necessary, he has to have *śraddhā* towards the doctor's words and go with the operation.

In the same way, I tell you, just live without the mind. Just live without purpose and goals; you will be able to walk without the stick. The stick is nothing but your planning and worrying. But you never believe that you can live without worrying. By and by, worrying has become a part of you. So you can never imagine that you can survive without worrying.

When I say you can live without worrying, you will say, 'No, no, no! How can it be possible? If I don't worry what will happen to my children? What will happen to my house? What will happen to my wife? What will happen to my family? What will happen to my property? What will happen to my lawsuits?'

Please be very clear: Never think your life is going smoothly because of you. It is going smoothly in spite of you! Your life is not going smoothly because of you; in spite of you it is going smoothly!

When you have the courage, the *śraddhā* towards these teachings and start living without purpose, only then will you realize you don't need the stick to walk. Once you enter into the depths of your being, you will enter into a totally different dimension.

Whatever you think now as spiritual life or material life, both will lose their meaning and you will enter into a new dimension of life.

For example, can you explain about life to a four-year-old child? You can't. He will not be able to understand. He can understand only toys. He can only play with toys. Once he becomes older, naturally he will be able to understand what life is. Automatically toys and dolls will leave him.

Do you miss your toys? Do you feel that you have renounced your toys? No! When you grow, you start experiencing a different dimension of your life and the toys simply drop.

You dropping smoking is not important, smoking dropping you is important.

When you enter into your being, when you experience the purposelessness of life, the so-called material life and spiritual life both drop you and you enter into what I call 'Quantum spirituality' or eternal consciousness. You are then in eternal bliss; you start living in eternal bliss.

Only when you reach the being will you understand that you don't need worries to live. You don't need your mind. You don't need to be harboring any worry to live. Until you reach the being, you need to have *śraddhā*. Until you gain your vision, you must have *śraddhā* and lie down on the operating table. You need to allow the doctor to work on you. That is the reason Krishna says, '*śraddhāvanto anasūyanto*.'

The next word is a beautiful word: '*anasūyanto*', which means 'without envy'. This is an important thing. Whatever has been said so far, everyone is able to understand and agree with.

But suddenly, a thought comes, 'My brother has purchased two houses. My sister is getting a big new car. How can I live just like this?' The moment you get such thoughts, 'He has that, she has this,' what happens? All your spirituality, all your purposelessness, all your philosophy, everything just disappears. You are again in the same rat race. If your neighbor buys a new air-conditioner, the temperature in your house shoots up.

Krishna says, 'without envy'. Envy is the thing that puts you again and again in the same rut. The problem with the rat race is, even if you win, you are still a rat! Even if you win, you are only a rat. Nothing more than that!

The moment envy or jealousy enters into your being, purposelessness disappears. Again, you fall into social conditioning; you start running behind goals. Envy or jealousy is what makes you run like a rat.

There is a beautiful idea from *Tantra* about *māyā śakti* (the power of illusion). Illusion makes us all dance with just this one stick called jealousy. Have you seen



the guys who make money using monkeys in India? On the roadside, they do a small show with monkeys. They always carry a small stick. They rotate the stick and shout in Tamil, 'Aadu da rama, aadu da rama': dance Rama, dance Rama. They give instructions and the monkey obeys. With a small stick they make the monkey dance and do whatever they want it to.

In the same way, the power of illusion is making you run as it wants with just one stick called jealousy, envy or comparison. The moment you compare, you just jump into the same path again, the same rut, the same routine, which I call the purposeful life. Then you become a *karmi*, not *karma yogi*.

The man who lives in eternal consciousness, *nitya ānanda*, and allows his body and mind to work according to their nature, is centered in eternal consciousness. He is called a *karma yogi*, one who has espoused action without attachment as the ultimate renunciation.

But the man who acts out of jealousy, out of envy and out of comparison, enters into social conditioning. He is caught in the rat race, and is called a *karmi*, one who is focused on action arising from greed.

The difference between a *karmi* and a *karma yogi* is only this: The man who is driven by jealousy is a *karmi*, and the man who allows the eternal consciousness to drive him is a *karma yogi*.

One more thing: When we do things out of comparison, we do only foolish things. Our intelligence stops working. And our performance will definitely fall short of our potential, because now we are using someone else's productivity as our measuring stick. We might be capable of accomplishing much more than what our neighbor has done, but now we are setting our sights on his achievements!

A small story:

A Christian and a Jew were staying opposite each other. Not only were they staying opposite each other but they were great rivals as well. If the Christian made a rose garden in front of his house, within 24 hours the Jew would bring in a new rose garden. If the Jew painted his house white, within 24 hours the Christian's house would also be painted white.

Suddenly, one day a new Mercedes Benz was standing in front of the Jew's house. This was too much for the Christian. Somehow he found the money, and within 24 hours not only did he buy a Rolls Royce, he parked it outside his home and started sprinkling holy water on it as well.

The Jew saw this from his house and asked, 'Hey! What happened to you? You got a new Rolls Royce, that's ok. Until yesterday you were alright. But why are you sprinkling water on the car this morning?'

The Christian said, 'I am baptizing it.'

Now the Jew was in big trouble! What to do? That evening he was seen cutting the exhaust pipe of his Benz with a hacksaw blade!

If you understand, understand. If you have not understood, ask the people who are laughing!

If you do things out of jealousy, out of envy, out of comparison, you will end up doing only these types of things. Your intelligence will stop working. When you start comparing, intelligence stops working.

Please understand that each one of us is unique. There is no need to compare with any other person. You are unique. The main problem is that you compare only with the nearest person, five inches above and five inches below, only with those persons do you compare yourself. You don't compare yourselves with Bill Gates, do you? You compare only with your neighbor. You compare only with your colleague. You compare only with your brother or your sister.

The problem is not even failure; the problem is your *worry* about failure. That is why you don't aim at unreachable goals, you aim only at reachable goals, and you compare only with those people in your immediate world. Understand that this comparison is what is driving you crazy. Again and again and again it brings up the whole social conditioning in you and eats away your whole life. Your whole life is eaten away by this one illusion called comparison.

Your whole joy, ecstasy, the very bliss or the ecstasy of living is swallowed by this one illusion called comparison. Just like how the whole earth is swallowed by the ocean at the time of the final deluge, in the same way, just this one concept of comparison, swallows your whole life.

Jealousy and comparison have no absolute existence. There are two levels of reality: comparative reality and existential reality. If you build your life based on existential reality, you will never suffer. If you build your life based on comparative reality, you will be continuously suffering till death. Not only at the time of death, even after death.

Don't build your inner space on comparative reality. Let your inner space be built on existential reality. Accept life as it is. If you build your life on existential reality, you will live your life blissfully in eternal consciousness, as a *karma yogi*.

A small story:

A man comes to the bar with a big grin on his face and asks the bartender to serve drinks for the whole house. 'Serve drinks to everybody. I will pay,' he says. The bartender serves drinks and says, 'This is so nice. I am very happy you did a good thing for everybody. May I know why you did this?'

The man says, 'I am very happy today. I have become taller than my younger brother. My younger brother used to be taller than me, so people used to tease me all the time and ask, 'Are you older or is he older?' So I had a problem. Today, I have become taller than my younger brother.'

Your younger brother being taller than you is a huge problem.

The bartender asked, 'At your age, how did you suddenly grow and become taller than him?'

The man replied, 'Oh, no! I have not grown. He met with an accident and both his legs have been amputated.'

This may seem to you to be in bad taste in a social sense. However, this is how many people react when they see another person doing better than themselves.

When we compare, when we live with jealousy, when our life is based on comparative reality, please be very clear, we end up doing only these types of things. We become blinded by comparison and our very nature becomes dangerous. Let your inner space be built on existential reality, not on comparative reality.

By nature, a person with a body and mind has to act in one way or the other. If you follow your nature, you can be comfortable and flow in tune with Existence. When you are relaxed, when you are blissful, you express yourself beautifully.

When you become possessed by greed or fear and try to be what you are not, you suppress yourself. What can suppression do? You cannot suppress energy. You can only transform energy. It can never be destroyed or suppressed.

For example, if you see someone who generally irritates you, what is your reaction? If you are in a position to show your irritation, you will do so. It may be a person who cannot affect you in terms of your money or position. In that case, you will make your irritation known to the person because you are not afraid of losing anything. He is not in a position to affect you adversely. But, say this person is your boss. Now, you are afraid to make your irritation known because he holds

the power to affect your job, your source of income. So you suppress your emotions.

Neither expression nor suppression can be the solution. The solution is to infuse awareness and understanding into this process. Your reaction of irritation is not because of anything the person has done. If you just look a little deeper, you can see it is how *you* choose to react that decides what you feel about the person. You choose to get irritated by what he is doing.

Why should you allow yourself to get worked up about the other person's actions? Also, it may not even be that the person has done something which you think is irritating. He may have done the same thing a couple of times before. But this time, he may have come with a completely different intention. Yet you are already biased by your past perception about him. You have decided unconsciously this is what he is going to do and you get irritated even before he comes close to you.

That is why I say that awareness is the key. If you are aware of what is happening both within you and outside you, you will not be controlled by your unconscious. You will be able to see clearly when biased emotions arise or unconscious reactions arise. The very awareness is enough. You don't need to suppress the emotion or express it. The awareness will itself bring the emotion under your control.

**Q: Swamiji, when a relationship is not working out, when should we persevere and when should we abandon it and get on with our lives?**

I think what you are asking me is, just how much conflict should one be prepared to put up with in a relationship! Right?

Love is the most dangerous path there is! Only those with great courage dare tread this path. At any bend on this path you have to be prepared for great joy, great pain, great beauty, great struggle, great understanding.

Yes, there is bound to be conflict in every relationship, because every individual is unique, and no two personalities fit together so perfectly that no rough edges remain.

If there is conflict, don't sweep it under the carpet out of fear that it will destroy the relationship. On the contrary, ignoring it can do just that. Allow the

conflict. Examine it. See what you can learn from it. Is it stemming from something in yourself that you are secretly unwilling to acknowledge?

It is only in an intimate relationship that you discover yourself. Your partner is like a mirror reflecting your true nature. After all, who else dares point out your worst flaws with so much clarity!

So examine the nature of your conflict. Also remember, in every relationship, there is a time to stay together and a time to move on. What kind of love do you share? Are you really, truly, surely in love? Do you relate deeply with each other, being to being?

Don't look for reasons and arguments. Don't intellectualize the process - simply turn the question inwards with complete honesty and trust. The answer will arise on its own. If your answer is 'Yes', then understand that the issues of conflict are mere ripples on the surface of your relationship.

These are just situations created by the ego to counter the sense of 'no-self', of surrender, that comes with love. Work around these situations with love and care.

If the answer you are hearing is 'No', then maybe it is time to move on. To remain in a relationship where there is no true relationship, no connection of being to being, is sacrilege, unfair to you both. Love, for you, may be elsewhere. Don't search for it. Just be open to the possibility.

In the meantime, don't let the conflict destroy the relationship, destroy you both. Nobody deserves that. Accept that this is not the person for you, and move away without resentment or bitterness. Don't destroy your own capacity to love. To become bitter will only cause you more suffering, and destroy your faith in love itself. And that is the most dangerous thing that can happen to anyone.

Many people have followed this technique I am about to describe with tremendous healing effect in their relationships. To understand the principles behind this technique it is useful to have attended at least the basic Life Bliss Program Level 1.

We all have seven energy centers in our body-mind system, called *cakras* in Sanskrit. Each center controls an emotion. When the *cakra* is blocked in energy you feel the effects of negativity and when it is energized you feel at ease. Simply put, a blocked center leads to dis-ease.

The root *cakra* or root center is blocked by greed, lust and anger, the spleen center by fear, the navel center by worry, the heart center by attention need, the

throat center by jealousy, the eyebrow center by ego and the crown center by discontentment. A person who has gone through the LBP 1 course will be able to recognize the blocked center from which the other person is acting, based on the emotions of the interaction with that person.

Normally one would respond from the same energy center or another blocked center. We tend to respond to an angry person with anger or fear. However, we have the capability to respond to all such interactions from an open heart *cakra*. All that we need to do is respond with unconditional love. Whether a person comes to us in anger, fear, worry or ego, it is possible to respond with love, and with no expectation in return.

You may think that this is impractical. It is not. If you try this, you will find that your relationships improve miraculously. It is especially difficult with people close to you, especially a spouse, and therefore, all the more reason to practice with one's spouse! Many people say, and believe it when they say it, that they love the whole world. When you ask them to prove that they love their spouse, they are stumped!

People talk about Transactional Analysis and other such techniques. They talk about cross-communication between parent and child. Ultimately all communication is based on emotions and feelings. These emotions are linked to the various energy centers. Love is the most powerful emotion. It is the only emotion that can overcome all other emotions, when it is spontaneous and unconditional.

This is why in every culture and religion, love is associated with the Divine and the heart is associated with love. Open your heart, energize your heart center and let unconditional love flow out of you. It will transform you and transform others.



## Do Your Duty

*3.30 Dedicating the results of work to Me, with consciousness filled with Me Even the wise person acts according to the modes of his own nature, for all living beings go through their nature. What can restraint of the senses do?*

*3.34 Attachment and repulsion of the senses for sense objects should be put under control.*

*One should never come under their control as they certainly are the stumbling blocks on the path of self-realization.*

*3.35 It is better to do one's own duty, even if it is in a faulty manner, than to do someone else's duty perfectly.*

*Death in the course of performing one's own duty is better than doing another's duty, as this can be dangerous.*

*3.36 Arjuna said, 'O descendant of Vrishni, then, by what is man forced to commit sinful acts, even without desiring, as if engaged by force?'*

*3.37 The Lord said, 'It is lust and anger born of the attribute of passion, all-devouring and sinful, which is one's greatest enemies in this world.'*

Here, it is important to understand what duty means. If I have to do my duty, I need to know how to identify my duty.

The idea of duty is different for different people, different countries, different cultures, and different religions. Hence the term 'duty' is impossible to clearly

define. We have always been trained by society, by conscience, to consider certain acts as duty; some as good and others as bad.

We are brought up with certain ideas of duty. For example, it is our duty to help elderly people. It is our duty to follow principles of truth, non-violence, non-stealing and such tenets. We are brought up with these concepts of morality, but how many of us have experienced the beauty of implementing them?

Then there are certain principles that get handed down depending on the religion we follow. For example, a starving person who finds a piece of meat has no problem eating it if he is a non-vegetarian. On the other hand, a vegetarian would feel it is his duty not to touch meat even if it means losing his life. In some religions, you can marry only once but in some other religions, you can marry multiple times. These are all socially defined duties.

One thing we should remember is never to judge the customs of other people by our standards. There is no common standard for the universe. There is no universal scale by which you can measure people and their actions.

What Krishna talks about here is not socially defined duty or conscience. He is talking about consciousness.

Vivekananda talks about a sage, a yogi in India. He was a peculiar man; he would not teach anyone. If you asked him a question, he would not answer. However, if you asked him a question and waited for some days, in the course of conversation, he would bring up the subject and throw wonderful light on it.

He once told Vivekananda the secret of work. 'Let the end and the means be joined into one.'

When you are doing any work, do not think of anything beyond that. Do it as worship, as the highest worship, and devote your whole energy to it for that time. Give it your full attention. The right performance of duty at any point in life, without attachment to the results, leads us to the highest realization.

The worker who is attached to the results is the one who grumbles about the nature of the duty. To the unattached worker, all duties are equally good. He welcomes what he has to do, irrespective of the external nature of the job. He approaches every act with the same enthusiasm and liveliness and becomes completely involved in the task at hand.

In the great epic Mahabharata, there are actually three versions of the Gita: Bhagavad Gita and Anugita, both delivered by Sri Krishna; the third and equally important one is called Vyadha Gita, the song of a butcher.



A butcher delivered this Vyadha Gita; a man who is considered a sinner or a *candāla* (low caste person) delivered this great scripture.

There lived a great yogi, a person with special powers but who was not yet enlightened. He was a highly egoistic person. He was meditating under a tree in a forest. A bird sitting on the tree relieved itself and the droppings fell on him. He was disturbed and angry and he opened his eyes and looked at the bird. The bird was killed by the power of his gaze. The yogi was feeling very proud of what he had done.

He then went on his daily round of begging for alms. He came to a house and begged for food. The lady of the house called out from inside the house and asked him to wait as she was serving her husband. The yogi was upset. He thought to himself, 'Foolish woman! She is serving her husband, an ordinary man, and she is making a great yogi like me wait!'

Suddenly he heard the lady's voice again as if in answer, 'I am not like the bird in the forest to be killed so easily. Your powers may be used against birds but not against me, so relax!'

The yogi was shocked! The lady actually knew not only what he was thinking, but even about what had happened in the forest! The yogi apologized to the lady when she came out to give him food.

He asked her, 'Mother, how did you know what I was thinking? And how did you know about what happened in the forest? Please teach me how I can also achieve this.'

She replied, 'You have attained *shakti* (power) but not *buddhi* (intelligence). Go to the butcher who is down the road and he will teach you.' Now, the yogi was even more surprised. He thought, 'How can an ordinary butcher teach me anything about *buddhi*?'

But what the lady had done was too much for him. So he quietly took the lady's counsel and went down the road to the butcher's shop.

When he reached the butcher's shop, he saw that the butcher was busy cutting up the meat of the animals that he had just slaughtered. He could not imagine how he could learn anything from the butcher. But he wanted to have intelligence, so he approached the butcher and asked, 'I was told by a lady living nearby to ask you about intelligence. Can you explain to me how to attain intelligence?'

The butcher explained how he himself had achieved intelligence, the ultimate experience.

All he did to achieve it was, do his job with complete awareness and total involvement. He did his job with complete intensity and used the money that he earned to take care of his aged parents, which he did with equal devotion and involvement.

Just the very doing of his duty had liberated him. The nature of his work, the act of slaughtering animals, was not important. The attitude with which he did it, the sincerity, was what mattered.

You may be doing the greatest acts of social service and in the eyes of society you may be a great man. But if the attitude, the energy behind the act is not positive, the action is just hypocritical and insincere.

Each of us is unique in our capabilities and interests. Accordingly, our duties are also different. If you try to imitate others, thinking that their duty appears more attractive, you will be making the mistake of following somebody else's path, which is not natural to you.

A small story:

A newly married wife tells her husband, 'The woman next door has a coat exactly like mine.'

The husband replied, 'So you want me to buy you a new coat like our neighbor's.'

The wife replied, 'Yes. It would be a lot cheaper than moving to a new house.'

You see, comparison literally rules our lives. We waste our time and energy analyzing the other's growth. When we use our energies for our growth without comparing with others, we do our duty according to our nature and not compare with somebody else's or expect certain results from our actions.

These verses on *karma yoga* by Krishna have been misused by some to defend the caste or *varṇa* system in the Hindu tradition. They say that what Krishna means is that one should not swerve from one's *varṇa dharma*, the duty of one's caste. They do not understand the origin of the caste system.

In the *vedic* culture, a child was taken to a *gurukul* (the ancient system of living with and learning at the feet of the master) at a very early age, before the age of

seven. The master then took care of the child until the child reached adulthood. He taught the child based on its abilities. If the child had the aptitude to become a scholar he was trained in scriptures, and became a *brahmin*. If the child was aggressive and courageous, he was trained in martial arts, and became a *kṣatriya*, meaning warrior, and so on.

*Varṇa* or caste classification was based on one's natural abilities and not on birth. It was a state, not a status. Over time, this practice degenerated into a classification based on heredity, with no attention paid to natural aptitude.

It is in the *vedic* educational context that one needs to understand Krishna's injunction in these verses.

Arjuna then asks Krishna why even a centered person is led to commit sinful acts, as if forced by unknown powers. Arjuna's question is the eternal dilemma of expression or suppression.

For example, if you see a beautiful woman and you feel attracted to her, you feel this is not correct according to what society has taught you and you try to suppress your feelings. Can this work? If you try to suppress something, it will surface again with more intensity.

We are always conditioned by society, which teaches us that anyone with passion is a lower human. Anyone with lust is a lower person. Understand, there is no lower or higher person. Only a transformation of energy needs to happen.

The people who pretend to be moralists are either afraid to express their lust or they feel guilty about expressing it. So they go about preaching to others that being lustful means you are a lower person.

The moment you think you are a lower human, you start fighting with that feeling. Then it becomes very difficult to get out of that and for the transformation to happen. Anything that you resist persists. What you need to do is bring in awareness and allow the transformation to happen.

What needs to be done is to have understanding and awareness. Then the base energy of lust can be transformed into the higher energy of love. It is an alchemy process. Alchemy is the process of changing any base metal to a higher metal. Similarly, changing our base emotion, lust, to the highest emotion we are capable of, love, is an alchemy.

In alchemy, first the impurity is removed from the base metal. Then something is added to it, and finally, the base metal undergoes the process of transformation into the higher metal.

First, the impurity should be removed from lust. We all have lust, which is an animal emotion. One more thing: At least animals have pure lust. When they are in a relationship, they forget about the world and are purely in the relationship. But for us, even our lust is not pure. It is contaminated by all kinds of imagination and fantasies that we have picked up from the media.

We live with a solid cerebral layer of fantasies collected from all that we have seen on the television, the internet, in books and so on. Even when you are in a relationship, you are relating from this layer. You are not relating with your actual partner. Your actual partner becomes a poor substitute for the images in your mind.

Your lust is contaminated by feelings of guilt and desire. Either our conditioning from our past makes us feel guilty and so we withdraw, or the intense desire to continue makes us indulge excessively, only to make us feel guilty again. It is a vicious cycle of pulling and pushing, as a result of which the lust is simply contaminated.

Always, if you notice, the moment you fulfill your fantasy, you are engulfed by guilt. That is why sex makes you feel guilty. Your family and society instill the first sense of guilt in you when you are a child. Then you master the art of creating guilt for yourself!

Understand, anyone who wants to have control over you, first instills guilt in you. They make you feel you are inferior in some fashion. Then, automatically, you follow what they are saying.

Man knows to control only through guilt. I tell you, rules are good for children. It is good to start with rules. But it is important that you grow and be led by your own intelligence.

When you indulge in desires and become prone to guilt, you are caught in a vicious cycle. That is why you don't go deep into your desires, fulfill them and come out liberated, but keep coming back with more and more craving. If you go deep into it, you will flower out of it!

In earlier times, people were able to drop their lust by the age of 40. They never had such complicated images in their minds. They related directly with their husband or wife. They were able to move deeper into lust and come out of it. Lust simply dropped from them; they did not have to drop it.

In Indian marriages, there is a beautiful verse which priests make the couples recite. The meaning of the verse is, 'In the eleventh year of marriage, let the wife

become the mother, and the husband the son.’ This may sound strange and you may wonder how the wife can become a mother to the husband. What it means is, let the relationship reach the ultimate fulfillment.

The ultimate fulfillment for a woman is when she expresses the motherliness in her, the creative energy in her. The ultimate fulfillment for the man is when he comes back to the innocence of the child. So, by the eleventh year, let the relationship mature to such an extent that both the husband and wife attain the ultimate fulfillment.

First, the impurity in lust needs to be removed, like how the impurity in the base metal needs to be removed in alchemy. Then the element of friendship needs to be added; a deep friendship, a relationship at the being level and not just at the physical or mental level.

When you feel deeply connected to a person, there will be no need for physical proximity to that person. You will feel happy and satisfied with just the feeling of connection with him or her. This connection will not suffer with separation or anything else.

For the final transformation of lust into love, the relationship needs to go through the process of patience and perseverance. You need to be patient for the other person to accept the transformation you are going through. You need to give the other time to understand that this is indeed a real change and not just a superficial, temporary change. Then he or she will automatically be transformed as well. The energy of your transformation is sure to touch the other person.

Here Krishna refers to lust and anger, both born out of passion. Anger is also an emotion that is born out of lust. When the other person rejects your lust, it turns into anger against that person. Anger is again a tremendous energy that we misuse because we do not understand and respect it.

Greed, anger and lust are all *rajasic* qualities that arise from passion and aggression. They arise from the blocked *mūlādhāra cakra*, the root center. These are instinctive emotions that we inherit from our animal ancestors. The *mūlādhāra cakra* is common to animals and humans; it is the highest of the animal energy centers and the lowest of human energy centers.

Indulging in these base emotions keeps a human being in bondage to his sensual and instinctive nature. This is the reason Krishna classifies these as the root causes of sin. A human being is endowed with consciousness that rises above these

instincts. The meaning of a human life is not mere survival; it is the realization of one's superconscious nature.

Anything that stands in the way of Self-realization is a sin.

*Q: Swamiji, you ask us not to suppress our natural passions. But is it right to indulge these passions?*

This question has specific relevance when you are trying to choose between what you think is the right path and what you feel is the wrong path.

There are many who are conditioned to believe that striving for anything material such as wealth or name and fame is not spiritual. They have this false notion that to be spiritual, one must give up everything material. So when you choose to move away from the material path in search of what you think is spirituality, it is inevitable that whatever you are trying to renounce will come up in front of you with renewed vigor. Then the question arises: 'Do I suppress or indulge?'

On this path, when you try to choose between one and the other, you will time and again come across apparent dualities: good and bad, false and true, attachment and aversion, suppression and indulgence. In fact, raging inside your being is this constant conflict of opposites. Whenever a duality asserts itself, remember this rule of thumb: Existence is non-dual. Opposites do not exist. To cling to either suppression or indulgence is a sign of ignorance.

After all, suppression is nothing but a reaction to indulgence. What is essential is the awareness of one's own tendencies. Recognize anger, recognize jealousy, be aware of lust and greed. Neither give in to these emotions nor try to suppress them.

Simply attempt to know them for what they are. Keep your distance, and view your emotions as if they were strangers. You will be surprised to find that without your support, they cannot exist. They simply drop away! This may not make much sense to you when it is just someone else's experience - but through constant practice you will experience the truth for yourself.

It is only this awareness that can awaken self-knowledge, and free you of these concepts of indulgence or suppression and of other dualities!



## The Need To Control The Senses

*3.38 As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dust, or as the embryo is covered by the placenta,*

*So also, the living being is covered by lust.*

*3.39 The knowledge of the knower is veiled by this eternal enemy in the form of lust,*

*Which is never satisfied and burns like fire, O son of Kunti.*

*3.40 The senses, the mind and the intelligence are the locations of this lust,*

*Which confuses the embodied being and veils the knowledge.*

*3.41 Therefore, O Chief amongst the descendants of Bharata, in the very beginning, control the senses and curb the symbol of sin,*

*Which is certainly the destroyer of knowledge and consciousness.*

*3.42 It is said that the senses are superior to the body. The mind is superior to the senses.*

*The intelligence is still higher than the mind and the consciousness is even higher than intelligence.*

*3.43 Knowing the Self to be superior to mind and intelligence, by steadying the mind with intelligence,*

*Conquer the insatiable enemy in the form of lust, O mighty-armed one.*

Just like smoke veils the fire and you cannot see the fire clearly, just like when there is dust on the mirror and you cannot see your reflection clearly in the mirror,

and just as you cannot see the embryo when it is covered by the placenta in the womb, we are not able to see our true nature of bliss because we are caught in base emotions like lust.

In the hymn Bhaja Govindam, Adi Shankaracharya, the enlightened sage from India says beautifully:

‘Do not be excited by looking at the breasts and navel of women. Do not be overcome with lust. Think to yourself again and again that these are of flesh and will perish with time.’

Lust is linked intimately to the survival of the species. Without lust, there can be no mutual attraction between genders, no reproduction, and no continuity of the human race. This basic survival instinct is lodged in our primal root energy center, the *mūlādhāra cakra*. All our survival instincts such as lust, anger and greed arise from this energy center. Eighty percent of our spiritual energy is locked in this energy center. When this *cakra* is blocked we behave out of instinct, like animals.

In the case of animals, their highest energy center is the *mūlādhāra cakra*. Almost all animals, except a few domestic animals, reach this as their highest level of energy. In humans, this *cakra* is the starting energy point. When this *cakra* is energized, unlocked, and the energy is released, we learn to live as we are truly meant to, in intelligence.

Once a person reaches physical or sexual maturity at adolescence, it is very difficult to control the effects of lust arising out of the *mūlādhāra*. One needs to be spiritually awakened before sexual maturity, by about the age of 12, so that the energy can flow upwards towards the *sahasrāra* or the crown *cakra*, rather than downwards as in the case of usual sexual development.

The *mūlādhāra cakra* is the seat of all fantasies, primary amongst them being sexual fantasies. These fantasies are the ones that Krishna says are like the dust on the mirror, completely clouding our judgment. We live by templates that we carve out in our mind based on these fantasies, and live towards fulfilling these fantasies, rather than accepting life as it is.

When the Hindu myths say that Menaka, the celestial nymph, came down to disturb the penance of the great sage Viswamitra, the metaphoric significance of that is that Viswamitra’s *mūlādhāra* was still blocked, giving rise to sexual fantasies. That is all. If it is true that celestial maidens came down to disturb meditating sages, thousands of people, including all of us here will start meditating! Then we too can meet Menaka!



Awareness in the present moment is the key to unlocking the *mūlādhāra* and dissolving lust. Only the present moment awareness brings you in touch with reality as it is and dissolves your fantasies.

In the Shiva Sutra, Shiva tells His consort Devi, 'In a marriage, four people coexist.'

Devi is shocked. She asks, 'There is just husband and wife. Why four?'

Shiva explains, 'There is the wife, and the husband's fantasy of the wife. There is the husband, and the wife's fantasy of the husband.'

As long as there are four in a marital bed, it will be an orgy, not a love affair. Fantasies need to disappear before awareness comes in. When you bring yourself into the present moment, fantasies of the past disappear. They are history, not valid anymore. Fears and speculations about the future vanish. They have not happened; they are not real. You are exposed to the reality of the present.

Only in the present moment can lust be transformed into love.

Krishna closes his dialogue with Arjuna in this chapter with these words, 'Be aware that you have a higher intelligence. Use that intelligence to control your senses and curb your lust, which is your most dangerous enemy on the path to awareness.'

Please note that Krishna does not say, 'Arjuna, come here, I shall help you. I shall help dissolve the lust in your body and mind. You can then be at peace.'

Arjuna started the dialogue in this chapter saying that he was confused. He was confused by Krishna's words in the previous chapter, during the dialogue about action and inaction. He was told that the body is perishable, the spirit lives on, and therefore there is no need to fear killing his elders and relatives! Krishna then tells him to do what he has to do without worrying about the result of his actions.

Arjuna is highly confused and he gives up. 'Tell me what to do,' he asks Krishna.

So, Krishna tells him what to do. Krishna tells Arjuna to lead a purposeless life, free from obsession with the final goal. Krishna tells Arjuna to be detached from the result of action. 'Action is our nature,' He says, 'not inaction. Act, work, but surrender the result of action to Me.'

Now, Krishna says clearly, 'Control your senses, be aware, live in the present moment and give up lust.' Lust here not only refers to sexual desire but also to all desires, to all desires related to the outer world. It is our sense of identity, the sense of possession that drives us to acquire and enjoy. The truth however, is that

acquisition only leads to the desire for more acquisition, not to enjoyment and fulfillment. Desires are insatiable.

To be blissful we need to keep our inner space clean and empty. Only then can bliss fill that space. The outer space can be filled; that is not a contradiction. As long as the outer material space is filled without attachment, the inner space remains empty.

To make this happen, the senses have to be in control. They cannot be suppressed. Anything suppressed waits for an opportunity to explode. The mind and senses cannot be suppressed. However, they can be transformed. When we realize that life has no purpose, that the meaning of life is to enjoy the path, the journey, we learn to drop attachments to end results. We drop expectations. We move into the present moment. We become aware.

This is the whole essence of *karma yoga*. Drop your attachment to the goal, and live a happy life. Live life blissfully. You will achieve the Supreme.

Krishna says, 'You will achieve the Supreme.' You will achieve the eternal consciousness, *nitya ānanda* - eternal bliss.

So let us pray to the ultimate Divine, *Parabrahma* Krishna, to help us understand His message, to help us imbibe Him in our being. May He guide us. May He help us experience the eternal consciousness, the eternal bliss, *nityānanda*!

**Q: Swamiji, you tell us to 'give our all' in love. But what if the love is not appreciated or returned?**

If you are truly in love, you will 'give your all' naturally and not ask for anything in return.

Love is an unconditional outpouring. In love you don't stop to ask yourself whether the other person deserves your love. In fact, there is no question at all of the other person's worth. Love is a gift.

If you were to measure the other person's worth and give an equal and exact measure of love in return, that would simply be a bargain. It would be business, not love.

In true love, this question of 'Should I give my all?' would not arise at all!

Now the issue of love being appreciated: Tell me, what is your reason for loving? Is love a performance for which you need to be applauded? It is enough that you love. What is the need to look for any further reward? To ask for a

return of love is to seek some kind of control over your beloved. You refuse the other person the freedom not to love you in return. This is a kind of possessiveness where you cage the other in the prison of your expectations. And as I keep repeating, love can never ever blossom in captivity.

Listen carefully: There are two kinds of love - love as a quantity, and love as a quality.

When love is seen as a quantity, it results in the kind of selfish little exchanges that most people make all their lives. You hold out a tightly wrapped parcel of love to your man or woman, and expect them to promptly return an equal-sized parcel to you. If your partner should choose to give her parcel to someone else, or even to just open it and spread the love around, you feel cheated and angry.

You are both bound to each other by a pact of reciprocation. You have to be 'Made for each other'. Sooner or later this kind of arrangement leaves you cramped and frustrated, and in anger you withdraw your parcel and go off to find someone else to exchange it with. Or else your partner does that.

Now the other kind of love is love experienced as a quality of your very being. This kind of love is simply an outpouring of one's joy and gratitude, just for being alive. It is the fragrance of joy, and it spreads itself around unconditionally. It does not need an object; it does not need a return gift.

This kind of love is like sunshine or rain; it gives itself unconditionally, and whomsoever stands within its circle can experience the warmth or the freshness without question. This love always enriches; it is the only kind of love that can be enjoyed without fear or guilt.

For love to become your quality, you must be willing to surrender yourself completely. Only in an egoless state can this love arise. This is not easy, but you can make a beginning. You will discover that simply through love and gratitude, you begin to let go of the ego, just a little. And as you let go, more and more love enters into that space.

Try practicing this in your relationships. There is no need to make a fuss about loving; don't become serious in your love - just be totally sincere!

*Thus ends the third chapter named **Karma Yogaḥ** of the Upaniṣad of Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of yoga dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.*

# BhagavadGita

## Path of Knowledge

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### CHAPTER 4

Logic can never lead you to Self-realization.  
Dissolution of logic will.



- ◆ *Swamiji*, you had said somewhere that rituals are not considered relevant now because we have lost the code to understand them. Is Krishna talking about the same thing when He says that the science has been lost?
- ◆ This verse '*paritrānāya sādḥūnām...*' is one of the most quoted from the Gita. If this were to be true, Krishna should be on this planet all the time and there should be no evil. However, this is not the case. Can you please explain again what this verse means?
- ◆ You say that we decide our rebirth, in terms of what we shall be born as, to whom, where etc. Why are so many desperately poor and sad people out there? Why would they ever want to be born that way? People say that is their *karma*, which to me seems more acceptable.
- ◆ Even though Krishna may not have meant the caste system to develop the way it has developed in India today, it has become an evil practice. How can one accept this? It needs to be eliminated. Is it not?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you said that in the innermost energy layer, the *nirvanic* layer, God, you and I are all one, and that one realizes one's divinity. In the LBP 2 course, you teach this as a part of one's death process. Can one achieve this state while still alive?
- ◆ Many rich people may give with selfish intent, but those who benefit do not see the intent. They see just the benefit. If one insists on noble intentions while giving, very little may then be given. This will only affect those who need it most. What to do then?
- ◆ Even if you say that ignorance of our true divinity is the original sin, it still means that we are all sinners, as we have forgotten our true nature. So, religions that label all of us as sinners are in fact correct, aren't they?
- ◆ How to find out whether somebody is enlightened or not?



## Path Of Knowledge

The human psyche longs for continuance. Continuation and perpetuation of one's identity is of utmost importance to us.

We trace our lineage back as far as we can go in memory and records. We try to keep looking for something noteworthy there. Also, we keep ensuring that our heirs are well taken care of. We are anxious to provide for the weak ones in the family. There is a general anxiety on the account of our own lineage.

Arjuna has been driven by the same dilemma. To defend the fears he has about his own identity, he cites historical moral codes that discuss how one's ancestors and descendants are affected by one's deeds in this life. It is a simple transference of his present uncertainty to the past and future.

People ask me, 'When was this universe created? How and why?' I tell them that the next time God calls for a conference, if I am invited, I shall ask this question and find out the answer!

As far back as I can see this universe has existed. As far into the future as I can see this universe continues to exist. I can see no beginning and no end to this universe. It has been there forever and will be there forever. The human form as we know it now may change, but the universe will continue to exist.

The form and identity that we are familiar with is perishable. It is matter. Like all material things, it is subject to creation, destruction and re-creation. The universe is energy. It is formless energy. As it sees fit, it transforms into matter and again back to energy. That energy is imperishable.

This is what Krishna explained earlier to Arjuna. This energy, which is the energy of the universe, is the same energy that is within us. This energy is indestructible. It cannot be destroyed by a weapon, burnt by fire, dried by the

wind or wet by water. Whatever we see as destruction to the body-mind system is actually the conversion of the matter back into energy.

All religions may not accept this principle of the energy in man and the universe as eternal and continuous. That is immaterial. Views of religions change and have to change as new knowledge arises. Scientists are now in agreement that matter and energy are the same and inter convertible in time and space. Advances in Quantum Physics have shown that sub-atomic particles can appear in different forms and shapes depending on when they are viewed, how they are viewed and who views them.

For example, people think that materialization of objects is magic, miracle or trickery. It is none of these. It is simple science. It is converting matter into energy, moving it in energy form and converting it back to matter. We can demonstrate this scientifically with the help of modern technology such as Kirlian photography.

I showed the *ashramites* (those who live in the ashram) how this can be done. I made them count the number of rudrākṣa necklaces that they had in stock in a cupboard. I produced one from the air as if miraculously and showed it to them. Then, I sent them back to count the number of necklaces in the cupboard. They found there was one less in the cupboard!

Anyone can do this. All that they need is to know how.

No matter can be produced from nowhere. It can only be produced out of energy. Fortunately this energy source is infinite in the universe. This universe is known to be constantly growing. There is not even a known theoretical limit to its size.

The very first verse of the first Hindu scripture, Īśā Vāśya Upaniṣad, says that 'out of energy arises all matter.'

*īśā vāśyaṁ idaṁ sarvaṁ*

Upon reading this verse Albert Einstein the famous physicist said, 'It is only now that I could establish that energy arises from matter. Thousands of years ago these sages knew more. They knew that matter arises from energy. We are yet to establish this. The last frontier of science is the threshold of spirituality.'

It is important to understand that the constant factor in us as well as in the universe is this energy that is eternal. Once we understand this and understand further that there is no separation between the universe and us, all our confusion will be at rest. There will no longer be any fear of death, and there will no longer be the greed to acquire and hoard.

After all, the energy that is who we are is forever. Once we understand and accept this, we are in eternal bliss, *nithyānandam*!

**4.1 The Lord said:**

*'I taught the Sun god, Vivasvan, the imperishable science of yoga and*

*Vivasvan taught Manu, the father of mankind and Manu in turn taught Ikshvaku.'*

*4.2 The supreme science was thus received through the chain of master-disciple succession and the saintly kings understood it in that way.*

*In the course of time, the succession was broken and therefore the science as it was appears to have been lost.*

*4.3 That ancient science of enlightenment, or entering into eternal bliss, is today taught by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend.*

*You will certainly understand the supreme mystery of this science.*

You need to understand that Krishna is just thirty-two years old when He makes this statement! He is just thirty-two years old. Physically His body is only thirty-two years old. But He says, 'I gave this knowledge to Surya, the Sun god.'

Of course, this is very difficult to understand!

With logic, you cannot understand this statement. With ordinary logic, which you use in your daily life, you cannot make any meaning out of this statement. But Krishna goes on to say other things.

In the next statement He says:

*The science as it was, appears to have been lost.*

These two verses should be understood clearly. The first thing to be understood is that the truth is not new. It is eternal. It is neither new nor old. It is eternal. Eternal means it is there forever. It never becomes old. It was never new. Eternal means that which is beyond time.

Only things that are described based on time, can be said to be new or old. Anything new will become old one day. Anything old was new at one time. Eternal means it is beyond the new and the old. It is there from time immemorial. But it has never become old. That is what is meant by the word eternal.



Here, this science, the science of enlightenment is eternal or *nitya*. It is neither new nor old. The science that we learned in chapter three, the same 'science' is going to be explained further.

I gave the first glimpse of this in the previous chapter of Gita. The first thing that needs to be understood is the first glimpse. If you allow those words to penetrate you, if you open yourself to those words, then straightaway those words can give you the first glimpse of enlightenment. They can lead you to the first step of ultimate liberation.

Understanding the purposelessness of life will wash away all its stresses, pressures and burdens from your being, whether they are physical or mental. You are liberated in that same moment.

Krishna doesn't give you any technique that works over lengthy periods of time. There are other techniques that work over long periods of time. You will have to practice them forever. Your son or your daughter may get the result!

Krishna says, 'No!' He says, 'Now, here or nowhere!' Either have the result now, here, or nowhere. All His techniques straightaway give you the experience. If you can allow that one idea of purposelessness, the beauty of purposelessness, into your conscience, that very moment the breeze of enlightenment enters your heart. That very moment, the healing of your being starts. Healing of *bhāva roga*, emotional diseases and healing of *samsāra roga*, the disease of birth and death, start.

Five thousand years ago, Krishna says, 'I gave this science to Surya, the Sun god and the Sun god instructed Manu. The Sun god is Vivasvan. Vivasvan instructed Manu, the father of mankind. Manu passed this wisdom on to Ikshvaku.

Here, Krishna gives the succession, the lineage through disciples. He gives the lineage, the master-disciple lineage. 'In course of time, the science of yoga was lost,' He says.

You should understand why this science was lost.

When a disciple who listens is not sincere, if he is not completely ready, naturally the technique becomes a ritual. Understand that there is only one difference between technique and ritual. When it is done sincerely, even an ordinary ritual becomes a great meditation technique that leads you to enlightenment. When it is done without any sincerity, as a routine, without understanding, then even a meditation technique becomes a ritual. The only difference between a meditation technique and a ritual is sincerity. It is just sincerity.

‘In course of time, the science was lost.’ He has used a beautiful phrase, ‘the supreme science was taught, and the supreme science was delivered.’ You don’t lose that supreme science in just one generation. In one generation, it never gets lost. In course of time, somebody or the other, even a single unenlightened disciple is enough to destroy the whole science. Even a single person in that chain is enough to break the succession of disciples.

The problem is, when your master creates a big movement and if you come to his seat without having the qualification, you are the most dangerous person. I have seen people who simply come to the throne as a successor; they are the most dangerous people. They have everything except enlightenment.

A person who creates a movement, creates it only out of energy and enlightenment. If he doesn’t have the energy, no movement will be created around him. For the person who succeeds the founder, it is just a gift. The whole movement is a gift. He has got the complete infrastructure and setup, all ready and gifted to him.

A person who writes just because he is a writer is a dangerous person. But if a person writes because he genuinely has got something to write, that is okay. Only such a person can be called a writer.

A small story:

One man said, ‘Only after writing five bestsellers did I realize that I don’t know anything!’

His friend asked, ‘Then did you stop writing?’

This man replied, ‘No! By then I became too famous! I couldn’t stop!’

When you get somebody’s throne as a successor, you will be filled with ego. The successors have everything except enlightenment. I always tell people never to go to successors. That is because the whole setup was created by somebody else and the successor just represents him. They don’t have anything from their own experience. They are good librarians, not masters.

We must be very clear about the difference between a librarian and a master. Librarians are good. They preserve books. But they can only preserve the books, nothing more than that. The successor is also a good librarian, a good parrot. He can repeat the whole thing.

A small story from Zen Buddhism:

A disciple of a great master sits and talks about Zen to his followers. An enlightened master comes to him and says, 'You have yourself not become enlightened. What right do you have to teach others?'

Out of ego he says, 'Don't you know? I am the disciple of the great master.'

The Zen master laughs. He just laughs and says, 'If you wash the cup in which you have kept tea, will that water have the same taste as tea?'

Can you say that the water that is used to wash the cup in which the tea is kept, is equivalent to tea itself? What relationship can be there between the tea and the water that is used to wash the cup that had contained the tea?

Imagine that a cup of tea is here. Another cup contains water that was used to wash a used teacup. What will be the relationship between the tea and the water that was used to wash the used teacup? There will be no relationship. You can hardly smell the tea in the water!

So, if a person is not enlightened and is just a successor, he will be dangerous. He will create damage. He carries just the book and not the knowledge.

That is why Zen masters always destroy their books when they leave the body. Before leaving the body they destroy the books. They say that if you have got Zen in your life, if you have achieved enlightenment, you can teach. Otherwise keep quiet. At least you will not disturb society. At least you will not create more trouble in society. A successor without the experience, is the most dangerous person.

A small story:

A small girl was watching her mother prepare fish for dinner. She cut its head and tail and then placed it in the frying pan. The little girl asked her mother why she cut the head and tail of the fish. Her mother replied, 'I have always done it this way. That's how your grandma did it.'

The girl was not satisfied with the answer. She went to her grandmother and asked the same question.

The grandmother replied, 'I don't know. My mother always did it that way.'

So the girl and her grandmother visited the great grandmother and asked her the same question.

The great grandmother thought for some time and replied, 'My frying pan was too small to fit in the whole fish. So I had to cut its head and tail!'

Understand: If you are not enlightened, you can easily get carried away by anything that you see! The truth or the spirit of anything can be easily lost.

If you want to destroy any law, all you need to do is just follow it to the letter and miss the spirit. That is enough. You just follow it to the letter and forget about the spirit, you will end up doing exactly the opposite to what the law intended. You just go against the very reason why the law was created.

In course of time people who had not become enlightened and those who were not sincere, entered into this field and corrupted the science. Because of that the science was lost. That is why time and again our *Upaniṣads* insist upon going to a living master.

All our books are only manuals. *Vedas* are the only books that are courageous enough to declare that they cannot give you enlightenment. *Vedas* are the only books that are courageous enough to declare that they are not the ultimate. They say very clearly that they are only manuals.

If you want the ultimate reference, you have to go to a living master. What do all medical books say in the end? Consult your family doctor! They end with this one line! All these things are only manuals. You can't take medicines just by reading a medical book. You can't take medicines from a person who is not a doctor.

In India, compounders, that is to say, doctors' assistants as they are known there, are the ones who prepare the medicines, like pharmacists would learn the tricks of the trade by and by. In course of time these compounders would know that for a headache you are meant to take a yellow tablet, for stomach pain, the green tablet, for back pain, black tablet and so on. They would know the color of the tablet for a particular disease. If you go and take medicines from a compounder, you may sometimes get healed. You may get cured. But it is very dangerous.

Taking medicines from compounders and learning from unenlightened masters are one and the same.

Please be very clear, a compounder at the most harm your physical body. But an unenlightened master can destroy you life after life. He can destroy, misguide you, and create trouble, for life after life. This is because the whole thing is lost if you have missed even a single crucial point.

Here Krishna says,

*Evam paramparā prāptam imam rājarṣayo viduḥ ।  
sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa ॥ 4.2*

One important thing, He says, 'rājarṣayo viduhu', meaning, this science is given to kingly saints, not to just any saint.

If you have attended yesterday's lecture, you would know that the science He taught is Quantum Spirituality, which gives you both the material world as well as the spiritual world. That is why He says, 'the science is given to kingly saints'.

If this had been only for ordinary saints, he would have emphasized only on the inner world, the inner space. Had it been only for kings, he would have emphasized on the outer world and wealth. Here He says, 'kingly saints'.

The science is delivered to the kings, enlightened masters; enlightened masters who are kings. Only they can preserve the science as it is. Be very clear, only an enlightened person who is a king or a king who is an enlightened person can know the totality of spirituality.

People again and again ask me, 'What should we do for the poor?' I say, 'Give food and medicines for the poor. Serve them.'

Only a rich man who has enjoyed material wealth can understand the meaning and relevance of spirituality.

Be very clear, I am telling the honest truth. Poor men who have not seen the outer world wealth can understand only religion. They can go and beg in front of God. They can never understand the ultimate spirituality.

Only a person who has seen the outer world completely, who knows there is nothing in the outer world, only such a person can enter into the inner world. Only he can enter into the inner space.

If you still have hope about the outer world, you cannot experience the ultimate spirituality. You cannot experience the ultimate enlightenment.

Only a king can be utterly frustrated. Only a king can be completely qualified to enter into enlightenment, because he knows there is nothing in the outer space that can fulfill him. He has seen everything. He has seen all possible comforts, all possible sense enjoyments and all the so-called pleasures. He is ready to enter into spirituality with earnest honesty.

If somebody who has not experienced depression of success enters into spirituality, he will stand in front of God and beg, 'God give me this, give me that.' He may be a religious person. From morning to night, he may sit and do rituals. But he will never be a spiritual person.

There is a very big difference between a religious person and a spiritual person. When you know God has got the *śakti* (power) to give whatever you want, your religion starts. When you understand he also has the *buddhi* (intelligence) as to when to give you what, then you enter into spirituality!

We all believe God has got the power to give what we want, but we don't trust that he has also got the intelligence to give it at the right time! We don't believe that. That is why we beg and beg! Only a person who trusts that God has got the power and the intelligence, can enter into spirituality, trusting implicitly that He knows when to give and what to give.

Spirituality is the ultimate luxury. Please be very clear, I always tell people, a person who is poor, meaning who has not experienced the comforts of the outer world, can be a religious person. He can stand in front of God and beg and pray. But only a person who has seen the outer world to the extreme and who is completely frustrated with it, who has completely experienced the depression of success, can turn towards the inner world. Only he can become a healer.

I always say that only a person who understands the purposelessness of life can heal himself and others. Only he can be a healer. Only he can be a spiritual person. Only he can be a real spiritual being.

Here, Krishna uses the words 'kingly saint. Only a person who has lived fully in the inner space and the outer space, can experience the truth of the totality. Of course, when a person who is not sincere enough to realize this truth enters into the system, he corrupts it. And his very presence spoils the system. So, Krishna says, 'In course of time, the science was lost.'

In the next verse, Krishna says:

*Sa evā 'yaṁ mayā te'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ |  
bhakto 'si me sakhā ceti rahasyaṁ hy etad uttamam || 4.3*

He says, 'I am telling you about this very ancient science of the ultimate enlightenment or entering into eternal bliss, and being my devotee and my friend, you will understand the supreme mystery of this science.'

This has to be understood very deeply. One cannot tell this truth, this ultimate truth, to a person who is not ready. I repeat, this truth cannot be delivered to a

person who is not ready. And truth told to a person who is not ready, creates danger for himself and for others as well.

Again and again, people ask me during many of my meditation programs, 'Swamiji, please talk about your enlightenment, talk about your spiritual experience.' I never open my mouth and speak about my personal experience or spiritual experiences, unless I know them or unless they are associated with me for at least six months. I wait. People ask me, 'Why don't you talk about this, Swamiji? Why don't you tell us about your spiritual experiences?' If intimate experiences are shared when you are not ready, you always doubt and spoil the whole thing for yourself.

There are two angles to this. If you have courage, you will straightaway question the experience that is being shared. You will say, 'This is just a lie. This is a story. What are you talking about? This cannot be the truth.' You will straightaway oppose.

Or the other angle is: If you don't have that much courage, you will just think, 'Alright, this is one more story! I have heard one thousand stories. Here is one more story. Leave it. Anyway, after all, it is free!'

Either one of the two will happen. The spiritual experiences cannot be shared and cannot be opened up just for nothing. If it is shared it should become an inspiration source for you. It should become a force that transforms your life. Then it is worth sharing.

By sharing the spiritual experience, if it inspires you to enter into the same space, if it gives you the courage to take the same jump, if you also feel, 'I think I should also experience the same joy, I should experience the same bliss, I should not postpone it,' if it becomes an inspiration source for you, then it is worth sharing. Otherwise it is not worth sharing.

There was a great master in South India. He wrote a set of poems on Shiva. He did not even write, he just sang the verses. He sang a set of poems on Shiva. It was never recorded in writing.

Close disciples who lived around him requested him to publish it as a book, or to put it in writing, so that it could be useful to society. He said, 'No, they are my intimate love letters to my Lord. How can I release this to the public? It is my intimate expression. It is my personal relationship. How can I publish it? How can I bring it out in public?'

If, for example, you see somebody for the first time and he straightaway starts asking you personal questions, how would it be? Would it not be rude? It is too rude! Indians are the only people who make that mistake. It is too rude. They don't bother to introduce themselves. They don't bother to understand. They tend to be abrupt. If you ask personal questions straightaway, without even getting acquainted, how will the other person feel?

It takes a little intelligence to understand this social etiquette. You can't talk or ask straight away. It is very impolite. You need to understand that you can't share your personal experiences straightaway with anybody and everybody. It is very difficult.

In the same way, the master says, 'If somebody comes and asks you about your personal life, you can't share it. Only if you become intimate with him, it is possible to open up.' Only then conversation happens. For a conversation to happen, you need a certain intimacy. If both are filled with their own ideas and arguments, a conversation can never happen. If both are prejudiced, a conversation can never happen.

I always tell people, in a marriage, in the first year, the man speaks and the woman listens. In the second year, the woman speaks and the man listens. The third year onwards, both of them speak and the neighbors listen! The conversation never happens! Only arguments happen.

As long as the other person is in a mood for arguments, truth cannot be shared. The *satya* (truth) cannot be expressed.

The master says, 'It is my personal relationship and it is my intimate relationship with God. How can I share that with the public? I cannot.'

Then one disciple, who considers himself intelligent asks, 'Why? You are sharing with us. When you can share with us, why can you not share with the world?'

Then, the master says, 'By becoming a disciple, you have become a part of me. Only a person who has become a part of me can share these poems. Only with him can I share these poems. Physically you may be another body, but mentally, you have fallen in tune with me. You are completely ready to receive me. You have become like a womb, ready to receive the divine energy. This is the reason I share my experience with you.'

Unless you enter into a deep receptive mood, unless you become a complete, total, simple innocent being, you cannot receive the ultimate truth. Please be very clear, the ultimate truth is beyond logic.



Initially when you start to teach the truth, it always starts with logic. Your logic is always addressed first. Words go logically. But after some time, you have to leave logic behind. Otherwise, you can't reach the Divine.

You can't talk to God through logic. You cannot relate with him in prose. Only in poetry you can relate with God. That is why, all over the world, whenever it comes to prayer, it is only through songs and poems.

Whether it is Eastern or Western culture, any culture, whether it is Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism or Christianity, when it comes to relating with God, it is always poetry, because you can't relate with the Divine through logic. Prose is not useful anymore when it comes to relating with the Divine.

If you want the divine relationship to happen, you need love. You need the language of poetry. Here, only a person who understands, only a person who has become a part of the master, only *he* can receive the master's experiences. That is the reason the master says, 'I share my songs with you, because you have become me. I cannot share this with the public.'

There was another great saint called Manickavasagar in TamilNadu in South India. Throughout his life he sang about Shiva. But he never wrote. He never recorded his poems. He used to always recite, that's all.

Once, Shiva himself came down as an old man and said, 'O Manickavasaga, I have heard that you sing beautiful songs about Shiva. Why don't you recite them for me? I am your disciple.'

Manickavasaga was in an ecstatic state. So in that ecstasy, he started singing everything. Shiva himself recorded the songs. Shiva himself recorded, put the songs in writing.

After recording, Shiva signed the palm-leaf document, 'Recited by Manickavasagar, written by Ambaravanan', Shiva Himself!

He placed the palm leaves at the entrance of the temple and disappeared. The next day morning, the priests saw the leaves. Suddenly, they realized, the signature said, 'Manickavasagar recited and I myself recorded this.'

Until the end, till his death, he never recorded his songs. Then all the disciples went and asked him, 'Oh master, please give us the meaning. Please explain the meaning of all these songs.'

He straightaway walked into the temple and said, 'He is the meaning of all the songs.' He pointed to the Lord and said, 'He is the meaning,' and walked into the deity and disappeared into the deity, into the Divine.

This story is a beautiful symbolic representation. He became one with the Divine. Till the end he never recorded his songs. Only somebody else recorded them. They were so beautiful, God himself came down and recorded them.

Unless you become part of the master, it is very difficult to understand his message. That is why Krishna says, 'Arjuna, this supreme science, the technique of entering into eternal bliss is today told by me to you, because you are my devotee as well as my friend and can therefore understand the transcendental mystery of this science.'

This cannot be told to a person who is not ready. And one more thing: When you speak the ultimate truth to a person who is not ready, it leads to many troubles. Not only does he not understand, but he also misunderstands and starts creating trouble for others.

With the right person, even a lie told by him will be good for society. In the wrong hands even truth will do harm to society. To whom it is delivered is important, rather than whether it is the truth or a lie.

With a wrong person, even a great truth like *advaita* (non-duality), 'I am God', may make him think he is God and make him start doing all nonsensical things. With a wrong person, great truths will become harmful things.

One more thing: A wrong person can never understand the truth told by Krishna. For example, Krishna says, 'I am God. I am everything. Surrender unto me.' If the person is not completely devoted, if the person is not in tune with Krishna, if he has not understood Krishna, what will he think? 'What an egoistic person he is! How dare he tell me to surrender to him?' Naturally the person, instead of understanding Krishna, will create more trouble for Krishna.

Here, the qualification to receive the truth is devotion. If you have heard all the things I have said in the other three chapters of the Gita, it is okay, because it is expressed logically. Until this point, I am able to bring both logic and spirituality together.

Now the time has come when I have to give the pure truth as truth. Please be very clear, great things can never be expressed by logic, because logic is not sharp enough! Logic is not so sharp as to express the ultimate truth.

Somebody asked me, ‘*Swamiji*, why don’t you prove God logically?’ I told him, ‘If I can prove God logically, then logic would become God!’ Logic will become greater than God. God is great because He cannot be proved by logic. He is beyond your logic.

Here, Krishna is going to speak about something that is beyond logic. This is where you leave your logic behind, become completely open, sit in a totally passive mood, open up your being and be ready to receive.

One thing, with logic, either you will understand everything or you will not understand anything. That’s all. There is no other danger. When it comes to the deeper level teachings, either you understand, or you misunderstand.

The teachings which Krishna is going to deliver now are much deeper. They are much more subtler than the teachings which were delivered in the last two or three chapters.

That is why He says, ‘Now I am telling you these secrets just because you are my devotee and friend, just because you are near and dear to me. You are my own.’ That is the reason He uses the word *bhaktosi*. He says, ‘You are my devotee, and you are my friend.’ *Sakha* means friend.

The person who is not completely in tune with Krishna, the person who is not ready to trust the master, cannot receive the message. He cannot understand it. Not only will he not understand, he will misunderstand. Misunderstanding always leads to complications.

Now Krishna enters into the deeper level truths, where you need to come down from your head to your heart, where you need to sit with your whole being and listen to the truths.

Here, Krishna gives a warning, *rahasyam hyetaduttamam*. ‘I am giving you these secrets, the mysterious science of realizing the ultimate, my dear friend and devotee, Arjuna.’

So, now let us enter into the science that is taught by Krishna.

Let us begin with a small prayer to Krishna:

*vasudeva sutam devam  
kamsa canura mardanam I  
devaki paramanandam  
krishnam vande jagad gurum II*

Understand, *Vedānta* always emphasizes on three things: *Shravana*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. *Shravana* means listening. *Manana* means meditating, contemplating on it. *Nididhyāsana* means expressing it in your life, or experiencing it in your life.

Here, these truths do not need these three steps. Just listening is enough. Just listening is enough for it to become an experience. *Shravana* is enough; proper *shravana* becomes *nididhyāsana*. Nothing more needs to be done. All you need to do is to sit with a complete open being, with complete openness, with a complete relaxed feeling.

These words are uttered for your sake, not for the sake of the master.

So we will just take a few minutes to meditate on Sri Krishna, the great enlightened master. Let us pray to Him to allow His words to penetrate our being. Let Him reside in our consciousness. Let Him lead us to eternal bliss.

Just take a few minutes, close your eyes and intensely pray to Him: Master, lead us to the experience. Give us the understanding.

Let Him raise our inner space by His presence. Let Him be in our inner space and enlighten our consciousness.

**Q: Swamiji, you had said somewhere that rituals are not considered relevant now because we have lost the code to understand them. Is Krishna talking about the same thing when He says that the science has been lost?**

You are right, that is what Krishna is talking about.

Whatever the great masters, including the incarnations, taught based on their experience, was not in such a form whether verbal or non-verbal, that everyone could understand. First of all, the concepts behind these experiences were not relevant to all. Secondly, in order to transmit the experiences to others, which was the intention of the great masters, it was necessary to prepare the recipients.

Both these considerations reduced the number of persons to whom these truths and these experiences could be conveyed and taught. When the disciples were sufficiently trained there was no need for verbal communication. It could be communicated in silence. It was an energy transfer between the master and the

disciples, which was the most efficient and most effective way. For this to happen, the disciples had to be at the same energy level as the master; at least when the teaching had to be imparted.

This is possible, as my disciples know. The master can initiate and train his disciples to be at his energy level, so that they can imbibe his messages better.

At the earlier stage, and sometimes later as well, masters did use words; but these words had different meanings at different energy levels. Often these were coded as metaphors. They were coded as rituals.

When Jesus said that the bread he gave was his body and the wine he gave was his blood, he did not intend his chosen few to become cannibals. It was a metaphor about sharing his energy with them. Over time this was institutionalized as a ritual, which had meaning as long as there was readiness in the followers to accept the ritual with deep faith. When this became a routine, it lost its original energy and meaning.

The reason masters were secretive about the truths they transferred was because of the tremendous power of these truths. If misunderstood, the energy of these truths could have been misused, as indeed they have been from time to time, even with all their precautions. At the first level, they could harm the user, and at further levels they can be used to harm others. Intelligence is needed to use such energies.

For instance, when your third eye center is opened and energized, you can get the power to make anything happen. The third eye center, *ājñā*, is represented by a twin leaved lotus. One leaf represents *śakti*, power or energy, and the other *buddhi*, intelligence or wisdom. When this *cakra*, this energy center is energized, one gets the power to do anything, along with the wisdom to use that power. All your dreams can be realized; at the same time you will know that all that you realized are only dreams.

Only disciples with awakened *ājñās* were entrusted with the secrets of the experiences of these masters. As anyone who has tried would know, awakening the third eye is not easy. It is the control point of all energy in the mind-body-spirit system and your entire system must be energized correctly for the *ājñā* to be awakened. More than anything else, this needed the guidance and grace of the master.

The great enlightened master Ramana Maharshi taught mostly in silence. His teaching was seemingly simple. He said, 'Keep asking *Who am I*, and you will

realize the truth.' I was initiated into this technique when I was very young, by a disciple of Bhagavan Ramana, and I played around with this method, which was called self-enquiry. I had a deep spiritual experience as a result.

The lineage of the master-disciple system is a sacred one. When it is continuous, consciousness prevails in the planet; when it is broken, darkness descends.



## I Am Reborn, Age After Age!

*4.4 Arjuna said:*

*'O Krishna, you are younger to the Sun god Vivasvan by birth.*

*How am I to understand that in the beginning You instructed this science to him?'*

*4.5 The Lord said:*

*Very many births both you and I have passed.*

*I can remember all of them, but you cannot, O Parantapa!*

*4.6 Although I am unborn, imperishable and the lord of all living entities,*

*By ruling My nature I reappear by My own māyā.*

*4.7 When positive consciousness declines, when collective negativity rises,*

*Again and again, at these times, I am reborn.*

*4.8 To nurture the pious and to annihilate the wicked,*

*To re-establish righteousness I am reborn, age after age.*

Krishna starts His message.

Here is a question by Arjuna to which He responds. Krishna delivers the message as a response to Arjuna's question.

This shows that Arjuna still needs to have the maturity.

He asks, 'The Sun god is elder to you by birth; he is so much your senior. How am I to understand that in the beginning you instructed this science to him?'

Arjuna and Krishna are almost equal in age. Suddenly, Krishna says that thousands of years ago He gave this science to the Sun god! This is very difficult to understand. Moreover, Arjuna lived with Krishna for a long time. He knows and has seen the human side of Krishna, all of Krishna's *līlā* (plays), all of Krishna's dramas, all of Krishna's moods. He has seen Him more as a human being. So now, it is very difficult for Arjuna to believe Krishna's words.

This is exactly the same trouble all disciples undergo. Disciples who live around enlightened masters undergo exactly the same troubles. It is very difficult to understand the Divine descending and walking on the planet earth in human form.

Arjuna struggles to understand. Arjuna is not able to relate. How can the Divine descend? What is happening? How can Krishna declare, 'Thousands of years ago, I gave this science to Surya?' It is very difficult to understand.

For example, suddenly if I tell you, 'A hundred years ago, I was the person who taught all these sciences to some enlightened master!' How will you feel? It will be very difficult to understand, to grasp, is it not?

If I suddenly make a statement, 'A hundred years ago, I taught all these things to the masters who were there.' It is very difficult to believe. And naturally questions will arise.

Here the same thing happens. Arjuna thinks, 'How can he say this? How can I understand?' But of course, he has become a little polite. That is why he says, 'How can I understand?' He does not say, 'How can you say this?'

In the second chapter, when Krishna says, 'Arjuna, go and fight,' Arjuna asks, 'How can you say this? How can you tell me to sin?' But now, he has become more polite. He has understood a little bit of the truth. He has become a little intelligent. He says, 'How can I understand? Please tell me.'

He is ready to believe, but he wants a little explanation. This is ok. But there are a few people who are prejudiced. They will say, 'No. We are not bothered. We don't believe it. We don't want it.' In that case, nothing can be done.

Here, Arjuna says, 'I am ready to believe, but how am I to understand? Please instruct me. Please show me the right thing.'

Always, when enlightened masters descend on the planet earth, whenever they come down, they face this trouble. Again and again and again, they face this trouble. When Ramakrishna declared that one who came as Rama and who came as Krishna, the same person has now come down in the form of Ramakrishna, he was



called mad! People did not receive him. People did not respect him. But there were a few qualified people who received his words and transformed their lives. They established the truth of his statement.

See, all philosophies or all movements can be started in two ways. One is the political movement which starts with huge crowds and huge numbers of followers. For the person who leads, the more the numbers in the crowd, the greater the number of persons in attendance, the more powerful he feels and starts making all kinds of statements and claims. These movements start with a huge number, but over a period of time, they slowly dwindle in quality and quantity. Once the founder dies, the movement dies.

The second type of movement is the spiritual mission. When the masters declare the truth, the quantity may not be there, but the quality will be there. Only a few individuals, a few selected individuals, listen to those truths, those proclamations.

When Ramakrishna declared, 'The one who came down as Rama and who came down as Krishna is present here in this body as Ramakrishna,' hardly a few actually heard him! Hardly a few were ready to trust him. The quantity may not have been there, but the quality was certainly there. Those few transformed their own lives. It started as a very slow, small thing, but expanded, exploded into an international mission, a spiritual movement.

When it started, only sixteen disciples were there. Ramakrishna had only sixteen disciples. Today, millions of people worship him as God. Millions of people have realized the truth of the words that he uttered. These spiritual missions start in a very small way, but expand and explode.

Political movements start in a very big way, but slowly die down. When the founder dies, the foundation also collapses. But in spiritual missions, the moment the founder dies, things start happening. It starts expanding.

For a political speech you need quantity. The more the number of people present, the stronger the speech. But for a spiritual discourse, you need quality. The more intense the persons, the more deeper the truths that come out!

For a political person, the inspiration is in numbers. How well was it covered on the television? In how many newspapers have the reports come? It matters to him how many newspaper cuttings he can collect. But for a spiritual person what matters is how many ego-cuttings he can do! How many people's egos can he cut and liberate?

For a political person it is the paper cutting, for a spiritual person, it is the ego-cutting. For a spiritual discourse, what matters is how many people are intense, the quality of the people present. The more intense a person, the higher the level of the truths that come out.

I always tell people, my best discourses are given always to small, close devotees. The best truths are spoken only to a small, close circle. Because when you speak the truth to an intimate group, it will be straight. It will shake the whole being. It will transform your whole life. Those who are not yet ready cannot receive it.

That is why Ramakrishna, whenever he wanted to speak deep truths, he would close the doors and call his monastic disciples and he would speak only to them. He would not speak to the public.

This very Gita is delivered to only one person. When Krishna delivered Gita, only one person heard it. But today, millions and millions, not even millions, billions read and practice it.

For all Hindus, this is the basic book. For a billion Hindus, this is the basic scripture. Only one person heard Krishna. Today the whole world uses it. So, to express the truth, the quality of the person who hears is important, not the quantity of persons.

Now Krishna starts to answer this question.

Let me repeat this beautiful verse:

*bahuni me vyatītāni janmāni tava cā 'rjuna /  
tāny ahaṁ veda sarvāṇi na tvaṁ vettha paramāpā || 4.5*

Bhagavan says, 'O Arjuna, many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them but you can't.'

Krishna first says, 'We have both passed through many births that I remember, and you do not.' Then He says, 'Although I am unborn, imperishable and the lord of all living entities, I reappear by my original *māyā*, by controlling my nature.'

*ajo 'pi sann avyayātmā bhūtānām īśvaro 'pi san /  
prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmyātmamāyayā || 4.6*

I think this is the first time He declares his divinity! All this while, Krishna was only playing the role of *ācārya* (teacher), intellectually convincing Arjuna of the truth and giving him the intellectual knowledge.

For the first time, He opens up. He declares the truth about His nature. He shows the divinity of His nature. I think this is the point where Krishna starts to speak the ultimate truth as it is. Till then, I think He was a little shy to open up to Arjuna!

When a disciple is not ready, you can't open up, you can't tell the truth. Now, the disciple is ready. So Krishna opens up.

He says, although I am unborn and my transcendental body never deteriorates and although I am the Lord of all living entities, I still appear in every millennium in my original transcendental form.

Three things we need to understand here. First He says, 'I am unborn. I never take birth. I am the ultimate *Parabrahma* (cosmic or divine energy). I am the ultimate energy.'

Krishna clearly declares this. I don't think any one else has declared so clearly. Even Jesus says, 'I am the Son of God.' Here, Krishna straightaway declares the truth. 'I am God,' He says.

Of course, it does not mean Jesus is not God. At one point he says the Father and the Son are one and the same. At one point, maybe to some close disciple, he declares, 'The Father and the Son are one and the same.' Please be very clear, when the disciple is mature, the master is understood.

Here, straightaway Krishna declares, 'I am unborn, *ajopi*, I am unborn, eternal consciousness, eternal bliss, and my transcendental body never deteriorates. You can always relate with me. I never die. I am unborn and I never die.'

One important thing you should know is this: That which never takes birth can never die; that which takes birth, only such can die. Here Krishna declares, I never take birth and I never die. I am the Lord of all living entities.

Somebody asked me, '*Swamiji*, can dead masters teach us? Can we relate with the masters who have left the body, like Paramahansa Yogananda, Mahavatar Babaji etc.?' One person came and asked me, 'If I pray to them, can they show me the path? Can they show me the truth?'

I told him: Be very clear, dead masters are not dead as you think. They are not dead. When they are alive, their presence had a body. When they are dead, their presence has no body, that's all.

Having a body or not having a body is in no way going to affect their presence. They are available to you always. They are eternally available to you. All you need

to do is just turn towards them, that's all. They are eternally available. When they are in their physical body, their presence has got a physical body. When they are no more, their presence has no physical body, that's all. But they are always available. They are alive.

When normal human beings die, the soul leaves the body. In the case of masters, *they* leave the body! The very wording is different. For a normal person, the soul leaves and we say, the soul left; life has left him. For masters, *they* leave the body. So having a body or not having a body is in no way connected to their presence. They are available to the planet earth always. They are always available to the whole of humanity.

I always tell people, it is very difficult to understand masters. Because whether they have the body or not, their presence is unchanged.

With intensity, if you reach out, even if they don't have the body, you will be able to relate with them. You can get the message. You will be able to talk to them. You will be able to relate with them.

When you don't have intensity or sincerity, even with a living master you will miss him. With sincerity, even with a dead master, you will be able to have the truth, you will be able to achieve. Without sincerity, even with a living master, you will miss him.

Understand, He says, 'I am the Lord of all the entities. But I still appear in every millennium in my original transcendental form; using my own *māyā* (Illusion). Because of my *māyā*, I assume the body and come down. I assume the body and incarnate myself.'

He means that He happens on the planet earth again and again in so many forms to guide the people. Ordinary human beings are in the clutches of *māyā* or illusion due to which they take birth. But Krishna has *māyā* itself under His control and takes birth due to His own wish! But again and again we miss Him. We are all conquerors of Buddha, conquerors of Krishna. We are conquerors of Ramakrishna. That is why we are here again and again on this planet earth!

Please be very clear, we conquer them. We conquer Ramana Maharshi. We conquer Ramakrishna. Even they can't do anything to us. That is why again and again we are here. Again and again we miss them. That is why again and again He has to come down. He has to come down again and again to planet earth to lift us, to show us the way, to guide us.

The next statement, I can say, the next two verses, if they are understood, then not only the whole Gita but all the spiritual scriptures can be realized. Here He declares:

Whenever there is a decline in individual consciousness, whenever the collective unconsciousness increases, *Dharma samsthāpanārthāya*, to establish the righteousness of the eternal consciousness, the science of eternal bliss, *sambhavāmi yuge yuge*, I myself appear, millennium after millennium.

Only a master like Krishna can declare the truth so clearly.

Here Krishna declares, 'I come down again and again, to set right the wrong.' He keeps the whole thing open for the future. He keeps the generation of enlightened masters open for the future, the possibility of enlightenment open for the future. He keeps the whole science open for the future. Only a courageous man like Krishna can declare this truth.

People come and ask me, 'Swamiji, are there more enlightened masters on planet earth?' I tell them, 'Surely.' There are hundreds of enlightened masters. Don't think I am the only one. There are hundreds and hundreds. I can say, even thousands. Thousands of masters are available.

Only a courageous man can declare the truth as it is. If you are in business, you cannot accept that there are other similar shops in your city. If you own any business, you would not give out the address of similar businesses in the city. Only if you are honest, you can declare, yes, there are so many other things available.

Again and again people ask me this question, 'Swamiji, if I take initiation from you, can I go to another master?'

I tell them: 'Not only can you go, I also encourage that you should go. Pluck flowers from all the beautiful gardens and make a beautiful bouquet for yourself!'

The thing is, the human ego is such, that it needs to be beaten by more than one person for it to die! So go wherever it is possible and learn the best things. Pluck flowers from all the gardens and make a beautiful bouquet for yourself.

Only a courageous person like Krishna can declare the truth; *sambhavāmi yuge yuge*, which means He keeps the possibility open for the next generation. He keeps the possibility of enlightenment open for planet earth.

This one single idea, if understood, can straightaway make you enlightened.

This verse is a promise; it is deliverance to all of humanity. In science, the principle of entropy states that the energy level of every system, including the

universe, degrades with time. So it is with consciousness. Over time individuals start losing their positive consciousness and collective negativity builds up. Of course, this does not imply that every single person becomes evil intentioned, but it does mean that on an average, spirituality, awareness, righteousness and consciousness of individuals deteriorate over time at certain periods of time.

One must understand that the consciousness is always individual. When one is conscious, one accepts all of humanity in the same manner as oneself; yet, each individual needs to be aware of his own consciousness. On the other hand, negativity or unconsciousness can be collective. A whole nation can become collectively unconscious as Germany did under Hitler, and other countries such as Italy and Japan followed.

In history, over many thousands of years, each time such collective unconsciousness has built up, there has been deliverance. It is as though there is a cycle of positivity and negativity, up and down, over time.

In science there may be entropy, but in spirituality there is none. Righteousness is restored eventually. This is Krishna's promise.

**Q: Swamiji, this verse 'paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām...' is one of the most quoted from the Gita. If this were to be true, Krishna should be on this planet all the time and there should be no evil. However, this is not the case. Can you please explain again what this verse means?**

Krishna does not say there would be no evil; He says He will be reincarnated again and again to reduce collective unconsciousness and to destroy the evil.

As long as humankind lives upon this planet, both good and bad will exist; both good and evil will exist together. What Krishna talks about here is the excess of bad over good.

In a spiritual sense, from Krishna's point of view, there is no good or bad. There is no evil as such, spiritually speaking. As in Nature, all these seemingly contradictory qualities coexist. What Krishna says to Arjuna is for the consumption of mankind. Mankind has created this differentiation between good and bad, and can only understand behavior in these separate modalities.

When I tell you that spiritually there is nothing good or bad, or that to an enlightened master there is no such difference, what will your first response be?

You will think: *ah*, now I have it! I can do whatever I want because this master has said that there is nothing either good or bad. I can cheat, I can kill and I can do many things that I thought were bad and that I thought would affect me spiritually.

Please understand that you are as yet in a state where there is a material difference between what is good and what is bad. Your own conditioning makes that differentiation. When you are completely free of that conditioning, that *saṁskāra*, the very awareness and consciousness that caused the conditioning to disappear will provide you the direction as to what you should do, without any differentiation of good or bad.

In addition, for its own preservation, society lays down rules and regulations, and religions lay down commandments. These are moral codes, not spiritual. They arise from conscience, not consciousness.

When you are in tune with yourself, when you are Self-realized, you shed all your boundaries. You are no longer a spirit bounded by your body, in bondage in your body, but you are a universal spirit, one with the universe. That was the first feeling I had when I had a deep spiritual experience. I could relate to everything around me as myself. There was no separation from anything.

When there is no separation, you cannot think of harming anyone else, because then you will be harming yourself! With this awareness, you do not have to constantly worry about doing good or bad. Your awareness itself will lead you on a path that is right for you as well as for others.

It is the creation of this awareness and the awakening of one's consciousness that Krishna talks about first. But it is simpler for a mortal to understand this in terms of good and bad, so Krishna elaborates, saying that He will come again and again to protect the good and to destroy the evil.

This destroying the evil is not a one-time job! Otherwise why should Krishna promise that He would come again and again? It is in the nature of Existence to be in many forms, some of which we understand as good and some as bad. Inherently there is no difference.

However, this state of awareness is the realization of one's true Self, one's true nature. This is the state that we belong to. Krishna, the ultimate master, out of His infinite compassion, wants us to reach that state. This promise arises out of His compassion to enhance our state and not out of an outraged expression of anger to destroy evil.



## To Know Me Is To Be Liberated

*4.9 One who knows or experiences My divine appearance and activities does not take birth again in this material world after leaving the body*

*But attains Me, O Arjuna.*

*4.10 Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being filled with Me and by taking refuge in Me,*

*Many beings in the past have become sanctified by the knowledge of Me and have realized Me.*

*4.11 I reward everyone, I show Myself to all people, according to the manner in which they surrender unto Me,*

*In the manner that they are devoted to Me, O Partha!*

*4.12 Men in this world desire success through activities and therefore they worship the gods.*

*Men get instant results from active work in this world.*

This is a very strange statement. He says, 'One who understands the nature of My appearance and activities will be liberated from this birth and death cycle.'

How can it be? He says, 'Understand my transcendental nature of birthlessness and deathlessness.' Just now He said he is birthless and deathless. *Ajopi*: I am birthless. Just now He says, *ajopi san avyayātmā bhūtānām īśwaropi san*. He says, 'I am birthless and deathless.'

Now He says, 'If you understand the truth of the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities, once you leave the body, you will not take birth and



death like ordinary humans do. If you understand My transcendental nature, you will also achieve the same transcendental nature.'

'If you understand that I don't take the body, you will also realize, and you will also not take the body. If you understand I am liberated, you will realize that you are also liberated.' How can it be?

We will start with an incident from Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's life. Ramana Maharshi is an enlightened saint from India. In the presence of Ramana Maharshi, everyday they used to sing some songs. There is a song called. '*Ramana Satguru*', which means 'Praising Ramana Maharshi, an enlightened master.' When the song is sung, Ramana himself used to sing along with the devotees!

Not only would he be sitting and enjoying, he would also be singing along with the devotees. Somebody asked him, 'What is this? You are an enlightened person, you yourself are singing your own name. You are singing, *Ramana satguru Ramana satguru*. What do you mean by this?'

Bhagavan says, 'Fool! Why are you reducing Ramana to this six-foot body? Why are you reducing me to this six feet body?'

This is a deep, very subtle thing; difficult to understand. He says, 'Just as you are all seeing this body from a distance, in the same way, I am also seeing this body. For you, Ramana is somebody. For me also Ramana is somebody! I don't associate myself with this name and form. That is the reason why, just like you all can enjoy singing the name, I also enjoy, because I have not associated myself with this form.'

I tell you, an egoistic person, at least in public will not show that he enjoys praise, because if he does, people will see that he is egoistic. An egoistic man will make others praise him. He will never be open. Here, Ramana Maharshi is totally open. He is straight. He says, 'Just like you enjoy, I also enjoy this name, enjoy this form, because I don't feel this is me. I don't feel associated with my name or form. The name is just getting repeated, that's all.'

Another incident: One of Ramana's disciples, Muruganar wrote '*Ramana Puranam*'. It is the *stotra* (verses in praise) of Ramana Maharshi. He wrote a few lines and somehow he was not able to write further. So he just brought the paper and put it at the feet of the master and said, 'Bhagavan, I am not able to write.' Ramana Maharshi says, 'Alright, you go, let us look into it tomorrow.' The next day when the disciple came back, he saw that the poem was completed.

Ramana Maharshi himself wrote and completed it! He wrote three hundred lines and completed the whole poem. The disciple was surprised. Bhagavan himself had written about himself; his own praises, written by himself!

Later, when the disciple published it, when it came out as a book, Bhagavan saw that he had put a small footnote: 'From this line onwards it was written by Bhagavan himself', just so that the devotees would be aware that those particular verses were Bhagavan's own words.

The first copy of the book was taken to Ramana Maharshi. He saw the book and the footnote: 'From this line onwards it was written by Bhagavan himself.'

He turned to the disciple and asked, 'Oh! Were the other lines written by you then?'

Understand, he asks, 'Oh! Does it mean that the other lines are all written by you?'

Bhagavan goes on to tell him, 'When you wrote all those verses, it was I who wrote through you. As such, you cannot think about me. You cannot write about me. What do you know about me?'

Unless I express myself through you, you cannot know anything about me.'

Only a man who has disappeared into the divine consciousness can write his poem.

In the *Bhāgavatam* (life story of Lord Krishna), Krishna himself sings, 'I am the Lord,' just like how He now says, *bhūtānām ishvaropi*.

This words are so beautiful: *bhūtānām ishvaropi*: I am the Lord of all living beings!

A mere boy from Brindavan, a cowherd boy from Brindavan says this! You should not look at Krishna from today's perspective. You should understand the whole scene as it happened, when this happened on the battlefield at Kurukshetra.

Now, because of time, we have accepted Krishna as God. But this was said when He was alive. When He was alive, people could not accept him as God. Hardly a few people realized that He was God.

When Rama was walking on planet earth, only the *saptarṣis* (the energy of seven sages that controls the world) knew He was an incarnation. Nobody else knew. In the same way, when Krishna was alive, very few people recognized who He was.

At least Rama lived a controlled life; he is easy for people to accept. But Krishna lived such an ecstatic and spontaneous life, it is very difficult to realize who He is!

For a socially intellectual person, or a so-called religious person, it is very difficult to realize Krishna, very difficult to understand Krishna. But He says, *bhūtānām ishvaropi*, I am the Lord of all living entities.

Naturally, it is difficult for them to understand. It is very difficult for people to understand. Somebody asks Ramana, 'Why are you speaking about yourself? Why are you expressing your own glory?'

Bhagavan says, 'If I don't speak about myself, you can never understand me. Unless I reveal, you can never realize. Unless I express, you can never understand. Just out of my compassion for all of you, I express the truth, I express myself.'

It is like this: You are going somewhere and you see a traffic jam on the road. You know one of your friends is traveling ahead of you on the same road. You ring up and ask him, 'How is it at that place? Is there a traffic jam? Can I come by the same road or should I take some other road?' Will he not have the simple courtesy to guide you? He will surely have that basic courtesy.

He will tell you, 'No, this route is okay, you come. In ten minutes everything will become alright. In this area there is no traffic jam.' He will give you some instructions. He will guide you.

With the same basic courtesy, Krishna is revealing His truth to you. He is revealing His truth to all of us. It is just a simple courtesy of helping fellow travelers.

Here, when He says, 'I am God, I am the ultimate,' He says there is a possibility, 'When I can achieve, why not you?' He shows the possibility, He gives us the courage, He encourages us. Here He says, 'When I can achieve, why not you?'

It is like a seed always afraid of rupturing to become a tree. The seed always feels, 'If I break and the tree doesn't happen, then what will happen? I will die.' But the tree tells the seed, 'Unless you open, I cannot happen.' Unless the seed opens, the tree cannot happen. The seed says, 'No, no, no, let the tree happen, then I will open.' But the tree says, 'No, no, first you have to open, only then I can happen.' The problem between the tree and the seed continues endlessly.

It is necessary for somebody to give a little courage to the seed. A tree that was a seed once and now has become a tree can give the courage, 'Be courageous.'

Don't worry. You will never perish. Open. Just like me you will also become a tree.'

In the way the tree gives courage to the seed, in the same way Krishna gives courage to us. You can also become God, like me. You can also experience the truth like me.

When He says, 'I am the Ultimate,' He expresses the possibility. He shows us the possibility. He again and again reminds us of our potentiality. He inspires us to enter into the same consciousness. He inspires us to experience the same bliss. He shows us the way of truth which we need to experience.

When Krishna reveals this truth, be very clear, Krishna is not egoistic. He is expressing His true nature out of basic courtesy to His fellow travelers.

The senior tree encourages the junior seed to open up and become a tree. The tree assures the seed. It says, 'Don't worry, I have become a tree. You can also become like me. You don't have to feel you will disappear.' It is an assurance.

That is why again and again I tell you, when He tells us 'I am God', He means, 'You too are God.' He gives you the courage. He encourages you to enter into the same experience.

And one more thing we need to understand, as I was telling you, as Ramana says, 'Why do you reduce Ramana to this six-foot body?' Ramana is far superior, far greater than his six-foot body.

When enlightened masters say 'I', they don't have any meaning behind that 'I'. Only the divinity speaks. For a normal man, take yourself for example, when you say the word 'God' it is just a word. There is no meaning behind it. At the most, you will have some imagination about God, that's all. There is no solid meaning behind that word when you use it. But when you say 'I', you attribute a solid meaning for it, you have a solid identity. You know clearly what you mean. But when you say 'God', you don't know what you mean. The emotion or the understanding is not supported well by any experience. The word is not supported by an emotional understanding or experience.

But with enlightened people, when they say 'God', it is based on solid experience and when they say 'I', it has no meaning. It is just for utility sake that they use the word 'I'. It is an empty word for them. Because they can't use any other word, they use the word 'I'. They have to use some word; there is no other way. That is the reason they use the word 'I'.

There was a great enlightened master. His name was Nisargadatta Maharaj. He lived in India. Somebody went to him and asked, 'Master, you say enlightened people don't have *karma*. But how can you speak? How can you do all your activities if you don't have *karma*?'

He said, 'I am not doing anything!' The disciple asked, 'No, you are speaking to me. How can you speak to me if you don't have *karma*?' Nisargadatta Maharaj said straightaway, 'I am not speaking to you.' He said, 'I am not speaking to you!'

He was saying the words and yet he said, 'I am not speaking to you.' It is very difficult to understand!

He continues, 'Because you wanted me to speak, the speaking is happening through this body. There is nobody inside.' He was just like a hollow bamboo. When the breeze enters a hollow bamboo, it comes out as music. There is nobody inside, just an empty hollow bamboo. That is why whatever goes in comes out as music.

When you become like a hollow bamboo, whatever words come out of your mouth become *mantra*, sacred syllables. Your form becomes *yantra*, the tool of liberation, and your whole life becomes *tantra*, a technique for liberation. Your words are *śāstras*, scriptures. Your form is the center for *stotras*, devotional prayers. And your life is the *sūtra*, the technique. Your very life is a technique.

Here, when Krishna says, 'I', there is nobody inside. It is just the Divine that is speaking; just the emptiness that is speaking.

Then the disciple asks Nisargadatta Maharaj, 'Then how do you say I am not speaking to you?' What do you mean by the word 'I'?

Maharaj says, 'Because there is no other word, I have to use the word 'I'. But this 'I' has got no meaning like how your 'I' has. Your 'I' is supported by experience. When you say the word 'God', it is an empty word. It is not supported by experience.'

When you say the word 'I', it is supported by solid experience. You know it. You feel it. If somebody asks, 'Are you mad?' you shout at them and prove it! When somebody asks, 'Are you a dog?' you just bark at them and prove it! You know the 'I' in you is solid. It has got meaning.

But when you utter the word 'God', it has no meaning. It is superficial. It is some imagination which you created through what you read in some books.

Something which was taught to you in some discourse; which you heard when you were a child. That's all.

But when enlightened people use the word 'I', it has no meaning. Like how the word 'God' is empty for you, the word 'I' is empty for them. There is no meaning. But when they say the word 'God', there is a solid experience behind that word.

Here, when Krishna says 'I', there is nobody inside. It is pure emptiness. Just the Divine speaks through him. Just pure Existence speaks through Him. He has become a hollow bamboo. He has become pure energy. That is why He can courageously declare in a battlefield, *bhūtānām ishvaroṇi*, I am the Lord of all beings.

Sitting in a home comfortably, where you have all the security, safety, all insurances, all the protection, and declaring 'I am God' is very easy, because there is nothing to risk. You don't need to take any big risk. You don't need to prove anything. Just make the statement, what is there in it? After all it is free! Say whatever you want!

But Krishna is making this statement in a place where He needs to prove it. He is making this statement in a battlefield, where all the risky things are there, where his life itself is at risk. One arrow is enough to finish his body. He will be dead. But He is making this statement in that space. In the battlefield He declares, 'I am God.'

What courage and energy has to be there behind His words! It can come only from a solid experience, a deep conscious experience.

Earlier I told you the story of Alexander threatening an enlightened master with his sword, and the master laughing at Alexander. 'Fool', he said, 'what will you destroy? What is in me is indestructible!'

Only an enlightened man can laugh in front of a sword. Alexander is standing with a naked sword and the master is laughing. He is not bothered. Just imagine, on the street, if somebody is holding a gun towards you and asking for your wallet, will you be able to laugh? Impossible!

But here, this person is able to laugh, in front of Alexander's sword. The courage that comes out of *satya*, truth, is the courage that comes out of solid experience. One important thing that the *Vedānta* scriptures can give you is courage: courage to live, courage to face life and death; courage to face the whole of Existence.

One of the great disciples of Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita asks him, 'Swamiji, if I come with you what will you teach me? What will you give me?'

Vivekananda says, 'I will teach you how to face death.' That is the ultimate teaching. Here, Krishna is giving that ultimate teaching.

In these two verses, He says,

*yadā-yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata /  
abhyutthānam adharmaṣya tadā 'tmānam sṛjāmyaham || 4.7*

*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām /  
dharma saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge-yuge || 4.8*

Then the next statement is very strange:

*janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ /  
tyaktvā dehaṁ punarjanma nai 'ti mām eti so 'rjuna || 4.9*

It means: if you understand the secret of My birth and death, you will be liberated from birth and death, Arjuna.

How? Let us see the secret of the birth and death of Krishna, how we all go through the birth and death cycle.

Now, just as Krishna made the statement, 'I tell you this because you are my devotee and friend', now I have to make the same statement to you all again.

Here I am going to speak on something which is beyond logic. It is pure experience. Before speaking, I take an oath: Whatever I speak is the truth.

Whenever the ultimate truth is uttered, whenever something beyond our logic is uttered, we never receive it completely. Please be very clear: A silent listener is a person who is thinking about something else! A silent listener is a person who is thinking about something else. Whenever something which goes beyond our logic is told, we never receive it.

If we are courageous enough, we fight, we question, we argue. If we don't have that much courage, we don't allow that word to enter into us. To tell you honestly, we never believe anybody.

Please be very clear: We never believe anybody. It is always an argument, sometimes open, and at other times, in the mind. If we can't express it openly, we continuously repeat the same words in the mind.

That is why, before entering into the truths, I tell you that what I speak is the truth. If you can, receive it. There is a possibility of transformation, because here I

speak the truth that is realized only by experience, which cannot be logically true.

There is a website on NDE, Near Death Experience (<http://www.nderf.org>). If you find the time, try to go through that website. A doctor has done research spending 30 years, just on this NDE, Near Death Experience.

Let me first describe what Near Death Experience is. People who are declared clinically dead, after four or five hours, sometimes come back to life.

The doctor who created this website went around the world, meeting those people who came back to life after four to five hours; people who are declared medically dead by doctors. He was interested only in those who have come back to life after the doctor's declaration that the person is dead.

He met about several thousand people. He has collected and recorded their reminiscences. If you find the time, try to see the website. He has collected so many different kinds of experiences from different kinds of people - from Buddhists to Christians to Hindus to Muslims and so on.

So many religions describe the death process in so many ways. Some say, if you have done *punya* or merits, you will reach a place called heaven, and there will be someone standing at the gates, and they will take you in; if you have committed sins, you will be taken to eternal hell. Each one has got his or her own faith.

Some say there is no hell or heaven and you directly go to heaven. Some say there will be a special *pushpaka vimānam* (mythological aircraft), sent from Shiva's abode, where Rambha and Menaka (celestial dancers) will be serving you, and you will be directly taken to Shiva's place. There are so many different versions as to what happens after death or what happens at the time of death!

The Kathopanishad says you will enter through a tunnel and see the *Angushtha matra purusha antaraatma*, meaning the light that is thumb sized, which is your soul. You will see the light when the soul leaves the body.

There are so many explanations, so many different kinds of versions as to how death happens, and how your spirit enters into the next body.

This researcher has categorized and explained everything. In the end, after doing research for so many years, he makes one important statement. He says, 'I have studied so many Near Death Experiences. Now I can tell one thing: Only when people live, they are Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, etc. That is to say,



they belong to different religions. When they die, all of them undergo the same experience.'

He says very clearly, all of them undergo the same experience, and this is the experience that is described in the Kathopanishad.

Here, Krishna explains that beautifully. He explains it in a much deeper way in the chapter on *Puruṣottama Yoga*. We will see that subject when we come to that chapter. We will study that then. Now I just want to give you an introduction. I just want you to know the science into which we are entering.

He says people belong to different religions only when they are alive. When they are dead, they follow only one path, which is described in the Kathopanishad.

Exactly what happens at the time of leaving the body? When you leave the body, the moment the physical body dies and relaxes, the moment the physical body says, 'I cannot hold the soul anymore, I am tired,' that very moment the soul leaves the body.

At that time, you think of that which you hold as the highest pleasure in your life based upon how you have lived in the 70-80 years. If you think eating is the highest pleasure in your life, naturally you would have spent your whole life eating. Then at the time of leaving the body, eating is the highest pleasure you can imagine.

You will think, 'I should take a body which will continuously help me to eat. Which is the best body?' You go through all the choices. Then you decide: 'A pig's body is the best body. Let me take that life!'

If you have the thought that sleeping is the greatest, happiest and most joyful experience in your life, if you have lived your whole life in sleep, in inactivity, then you would think, 'I think sleep is the best experience in my life. Why not take a buffalo's body? I can then spend my whole life sleeping.'

Whatever you think is the greatest experience in your life, on which senses you have spent the most energy, the maximum time and the maximum part of your inner space, you decide your next birth based on that desire, based on that point.

Please be very clear, nobody else decides your birth. It is you who decides. It is simply you who chooses. It is clearly the conscious decision of your individual soul.

I am ready for any of your questions. Naturally this is a very controversial subject, very difficult to understand. After this, any question you ask, I will surely

answer. But you need to understand the science of birth and death, the mystery, the secret and the mystery behind birth and death.

Here Krishna says beautifully, 'Here I am telling you the secret of things.' Krishna says, '*rahasyam hyetaduttamam*'. 'I am telling you the mysterious ultimate science, Oh my dear devotee and friend.'

We need to understand one thing: How do we take birth?

Let us analyze this concept with questions and answers. Understand, now I made a few statements: 'You take birth based on your desires, based on how you lived in the previous birth. Birth and death are your conscious decisions.' These are the statements that I have made.

We will analyze these statements with questions and answers. Only then will we be able to internalize them. If you just hear these words and go away, they will not enter into you. I always encourage people to ask questions. Because it is only when you question that you will be able to relate with the idea.

Never think that by asking questions everyone around will look at you and you will look like a fool. If you ask a question you may look like a fool. If you don't, you will remain a fool! Better to look like a fool than to be a fool.

We will analyze this whole concept, the secret of birth and death, the mysterious science that Krishna delivers, through our questions and answers. Then you will be able to internalize this truth. The moment this truth is understood, you will immediately see that life is a blessing.

This life is your decision, please be very clear about it. Including poverty, everything is your decision. Don't think poverty has been forced upon you. Even that is your decision. When we take birth, when we assume the body, we take birth based on our fear and greed. On one side, greed pushes us, 'Let me become the son of a king, let me become the son of a rich man.' On the other side, our own fears say, 'No no, I can't take on so much responsibility.' Along with money comes a big responsibility of protecting it. That is why goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, is handed over to Lord Vishnu, the Protector! Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, is neither with the Creator, Brahma, nor with the Destroyer, Shiva. She is with the Protector, with Vishnu.

Along with Lakshmi who represents wealth, the responsibility to protect Her also comes. Most of the time we don't want to take the responsibility. We only want enjoyment. We only want the enjoyment, we don't want the responsibility. That is

where the trouble starts. A person who is ready to take on the responsibility as well as the enjoyment, will never miss and will never be deprived.

If you understand this secret clearly, this very moment you will feel that your life is a blessing and not a curse. Usually we always blame life. We say, 'If I am given a chance, I would make the world much better than what it is now!' We always think we can develop on the existing creation.

Be very clear, surely God is much more intelligent than us! Whether it is to do with your life or to do with the whole of Existence, He has done the maximum that can be done. Because we don't understand the mystery behind our decisions, we continuously blame life and the person who gave this life to us.

Let me narrate to you a small incident. It really happened. It happened in America. A small boy had autism. He was a small boy who was about seven or eight years old. He was brought to me for healing. The father and mother requested me, '*Swamiji*, please heal him, help him become alright.' I put my hand on his head and started healing.

Immediately, the boy started talking to me in Tamil, my mother tongue. The family doesn't know Tamil. Even the boy doesn't know a single word of Tamil.

The parents were shocked. They said, 'We don't know how he is speaking Tamil, because we don't know Tamil.' The boy simply started talking in Tamil with great clarity. They said that normally, even in English he does not speak that fluently. He would utter only one or two words. But that day, straightaway he started speaking to me.

He said, 'Stop healing.' Using Tamil slang, he told me very crudely, 'Stop healing.' I was shocked, first of all to hear him speak clear Tamil words, and then in a crude rough manner, 'Stop healing!'

Then I asked him, 'Why are you asking me to stop healing?' I started asking, 'Who are you? Why are you asking me to stop?'

Then he said, 'I am the owner of this body. I took this decision consciously. I don't want to take the responsibility of leading a regular life. I don't want to take the responsibility of attending school, making money and leading a regular life. That is why I took this affliction. I took this decision of autism consciously.'

He spoke the whole thing to me in Tamil, in my mother tongue. I don't know how you will be able to believe this. Because this is personal, I am not able to give

his name and reference. But I tell you honestly that this really happened.

Straightaway he started addressing me: 'I don't want to take the responsibility of life. I am not interested in doing all these regular things, going to school, going through life. That is why I took this type of body. I wanted somebody to take care of me. I want to just enjoy.'

Then I asked him, 'Alright, that is okay, but why did you take birth through such nice people? They are such nice people, why did you take birth through them? Why did you come down as a son to them?'

Then he replied, 'I took birth in their family *because* they are nice people! They will take care of me. They will not abandon me. Had it been someone else, they would have abandoned me. They wouldn't have taken care of me. That is the reason I took birth in their family.'

All the while, he spoke to me in Tamil. I was shocked. And in the end, by force he removed my hand from his head. Then I said, alright, I cannot interfere in the decision of any individual. I cannot interfere in anybody's life.

The greatness of God is that He gives you the freedom to be in bondage. Even if it is the ultimate freedom He offers you, He never forces it on you. He gives you the freedom to be in bondage if that is your choice. And in the end, I did not heal him.

The whole thing, your whole birth, is based on your fear and greed. But the enlightened master's birth is based on love and compassion. The whole secret is this. Ordinary man takes birth based on fear and greed. That is why his whole life is driven by fear and greed. His whole life runs on fear and greed. Enlightened masters assume the body out of love and compassion.

That is why Krishna beautifully says, '*Ātma māyayā*, because of my own energy, I take birth. With my own energy, just out of my love and compassion, I land on this planet earth.'

The next question that follows is this: How can we be liberated by knowing this truth? In what way is it going to help us directly in our life?

Please be very clear, when I say the words *birth* or *death*, I don't mean just dying at the end of life. I mean, every night's sleep is your birth and death. Every night when you go to sleep, you die! When you come back in the morning, you take birth one more time. Every day, you assume the body. Every day, you leave the body. When you go to the causal body in deep sleep, you actually die and come

back. When you come back, every day you are new.

As of now, every morning, how do we come back to life? How do we take this body? Just look deeply. What happens at the time you get up from bed?

First thing, usually, the moment you become aware that you are awake, either a thought based on greed or a thought based on fear hits you. A thought based on greed - maybe you want to meet somebody, you have got something to do, or a thought based on fear - you have to go to office, you have to meet some deadline. Some thought based on fear or greed hits you. Immediately you jump out of your bed. Am I right? If you have analyzed your waking up, how you assume this body every morning, that moment is actually your taking birth.

Please be very clear, that moment when you take the body matters. These are the basic, very subtle, mysterious secrets of altering the whole consciousness. Early morning, with whichever thought you enter into the body, whichever thought makes you assume the body, that thought is going to play a major role in your consciousness. The first thought is going to play a major role in your consciousness for that entire day.

But an enlightened person, an enlightened master assumes the body out of love and compassion. He comes back just to pour his compassion out, just to share himself with the whole world. When I say he comes back, I mean his coming back every day, every morning.

If you understand this once and alter your thoughts at the time of waking up, you will alter your whole consciousness; the very quality of your consciousness can be changed.

It is just like how a camera works. The first moment the lens is opened, whatever scene is there in front of the camera eye, is recorded on the film. That will stay there forever. In the same way, during the first moment of consciousness while assuming the physical body, the thought that you have while entering into the body, plays a major role on your consciousness for the whole day.

When you get up from bed, let the first thought be related to love and compassion. Let it be related to a deep, divine, spiritual thought. Get up only to express your life in bliss. Get up just out of joy. The moment you come to consciousness, the moment you become aware of yourself, express, 'Oh Lord, it is so beautiful! You have given me one more day! I have come back to life once more just to see Your Existence. I am blessed that You have given me one more day's extension!'

Please be very clear, you have no right to have any extension. Don't think life is your birthright. I have seen many people taking things for granted. Before they get the job, they say, 'If I get that \$10,000 per month salary, I will be really safe. I will feel blessed.' The moment they get the job, in one month, they think it is their birthright.

Birth itself is not your right. Then how can you say something is your birthright? The word birthright is completely wrong. Birth itself is not your right. You have no right even to your own birth. It is a pure gift. You can't expend even a single breath thinking it is your own.

You can't inhale or exhale for even one single moment unless the Divine allows you, unless the universal energy gives the extension. So every day is a blessing. Every day is an extension. When you get up from bed, assume the body with this gratitude to the Divine. The quality of your whole consciousness will change and you will become an incarnation.

Here I am giving you the straight technique to become Krishna, how to enter into Krishna consciousness, how to become an incarnation. The man who assumes the body out of love and compassion is an incarnation. If you assume the body out of greed or fear, you are a man. If you assume the body out of love and compassion, you are an incarnation and you are divine. Your whole life will become pure eternal bliss. Your whole life will happen with a different consciousness.

I was explaining the secret of birth and death: how we go through them, how it is our conscious decision, how it is our choice.

Please be very clear, your whole life is purely your responsibility. Nobody has forced anything on you!

People always ask me, 'Then why do we get into accidents, *Swamiji*?' Please be very clear, everything, including accidents, is your choice. I am making a bold statement: everything, including accidents, is your choice. You can send me your questions. I will explain the answers tomorrow when I see the questions. Then you will understand this truth in a much deeper way.

Here Krishna gives us a technique to attain Him. If we are able to live in such a way as to be free from the attachments born out of anger and fear, then we can be absorbed in Him, we can attain Him.

We have to understand, all actions create their own reactions. When we sow a seed, the action, though it may appear to be complete, is in reality not so. We have set into motion a cycle, a chain of events. The seed sprouts and becomes a plant or tree.

Thus it is in the order of Existence, that every action or we can say, cause, has its own reaction or, we can say, effect. It is therefore quite difficult to escape from the clutches of the cause-effect cycle. Here Krishna gives a technique to cut these *karmic* bonds, to escape and realize the reality.

Actions that are free from fear and anger do not create bonds. They lead us towards elevated consciousness. Fear and anger that arise out of greed are two of the most provocative emotions that create action, and lead to bondage.

Attachments are our bondage to the future based on experiences of the past. We have unfulfilled desires that we hope to fulfill. We look for results. We get attached to the possibility of these results. When the results happen the way we wish them to, there is temporary satisfaction. More wishes arise. More attachments are formed.

When things do not happen the way we want them to, we feel sorrow, we are depressed. We strive again.

Either way it is a never-ending cycle that brings sorrow in the end. When we let go of attachments and perform actions with no expectations, we enjoy the path of action. There is no stress regarding what must happen, since there is no attachment.

Krishna offers a way out. He says, 'Be drowned in Me; you will have no anger, no fear. All actions will thus be without bondage. In this manner, you can realize Me.'

He gives the assurance, the valid proof, that having done so, having followed this path, many people in the past have achieved Realization.

He is not telling us, if you do this, maybe something good will happen. No! He straightaway gives the positive assurance. 'Do it, you will achieve! Not only one or two people, many people have done so and have realized Me.'

Masters are like mirrors. They are a true reflection of us. Devotees get whatever they ask for. If the devotee is praying for wealth, he gets it. If he wants healing for body or mind, he is granted it. To the devotee who says, 'Oh Lord, I want nothing

except knowledge of Your true reality,' the Lord grants him that. He shows him the way to the ultimate reality.

If you visit our ashram, you will see that there is something there for everyone. No one goes back empty-handed. We have prayers, fire rituals, devotional songs, yoga, meditation, service etc. for all kinds of people. People from all walks of life, from all cross-sections of society, from all kinds of economic strata, can find their place there.

For the devotee who has faith in worship, there are the temples. For the devotee who wishes to attain through yoga, there are various yoga programs. For those on the path of knowledge, there are enough and more avenues and meditation techniques. Only in this manner can we raise the consciousness of society.

I always say we cannot hope to transform society through any mass movement. It can happen only through individual transformation. The mass has to be made up of such transformed people. When such people act together, it will have the same power as a laser beam.

I always say that each devotee and each disciple is unique. The way I treat each one is unique. What I tell one person is not applicable to another. I warn my disciples, time and again, please do not advise someone else based on the advice I have given you. It will only cause more confusion.

Vivekananda once lectured to another disciple of Ramakrishna and made him believe that all his devotional beliefs were nonsense. Such was the powerful personality of Vivekananda that he convinced this disciple that he must follow the non-duality route that Vivekananda himself espoused, instead of the devotional path that Ramakrishna had chosen for that disciple.

Ramakrishna called Vivekananda immediately, without anyone telling him what had happened. He said sorrowfully to Vivekananda, 'What have you done to this disciple of mine? I have been working on him based on his nature and being. Now, with your words, you have set him back in his spiritual progress. It will take me years to bring him back on his path.'

Here, Krishna promises and reaffirms what He has said earlier, that He will take care of the need of every one of His devotee.



Only the most compassionate being, only such a person who cares for all, will make this statement. Now it is left to the devotee to have some wisdom, some intelligence as to what to approach the master for.

Krishna explains here why non-attachment is so difficult. It is in our nature to look for success in whatever we do. It is impossible to embark on an activity expecting it to fail.

There is nothing wrong in looking for success at the end of an activity. What creates problems is the illogical attachment to that expectation of success. We become so obsessed with what we desire that the expectation consumes us.

What Krishna says here shows that our mindset, human nature, has not changed in over five thousand years. Even then they were looking for material success. They were looking for instant results. When they prayed to God they were praying to fulfill their expectations of material success.

Again, I must say that Krishna is the greatest psychologist who ever lived. He has measured human nature accurately. What we want is results, material, tangible results, and instant results. In His days, in Krishna's days, when *samskāras* (engraved memories) were relatively fewer, when the cerebral pollution was much less, the word 'instant' itself must have been rarely used. People had a different concept of time. There was much less rush and much less aggression.

Yet the master uses a term '*kshipram*', instant. The master is talking about humanity; past, present and future.

He says you normally pray to God not as an expression of gratitude and not for spiritual benefits, but to seek unfulfilled material desires. You go to a temple and pray to the idol so that you may have more money, a beautiful spouse, more children, better jobs and all that you think will bring you happiness.

All your actions, Krishna says, are based on material success, and He says such activities bear instant results. Please note that they bear instant results. Whether you understand it or not, all these prayers and actions do produce instant results.

This does not mean that whatever you pray for is instantly granted by whichever God you prayed to. God, fortunately, has far more wisdom than we have. God uses His *buddhi*, wisdom, to grant what He deems appropriate.

However, the result of your actions is instant. The *karmaphala* is immediate. When religions talk of *karma* (action) and *karmaphala* (the fruits or outcome of such

action), they speak in terms of merits and sins, *pāpa* and *puṇya*. They tell you that you will go to hell if you accumulate sins, and you will go to heaven if you gain merits. They use these concepts only to control you. They try to control you through fear and greed; through fear of hell and greed of heaven. That is all.

There is no merit and sin, spiritually speaking. None of it is accumulated and presented to you at the pearly gates by Chitragupta or St. Peter. There is no hell or heaven. Hell and heaven are both states of your mind, not locations in some distant future in God's land.

When you think good thoughts, when you do good deeds, you feel good, you are in heaven. When you think evil, you act evil, you feel evil and you are in hell. That is all. That is all there is to *karma*. This is the cosmic cause-effect principle. You are what your intent is; you become what your intent is.

*Karma* acts instantly. It is here and now. It is not some slow grinding of the wheels of God. You live in the tormented mindset of a sinner or the blissful mindset of a sage depending on what you choose to think and do. Remember that. Do not put the blame for your actions on some misunderstood principle of *karma*.

*Karma* is in your hands. You are a free spirit; you have free will and you have freedom of thought and action. It is not merely guaranteed by your national constitution, but by God's own constitution. What you sow, you shall certainly reap.

**Q: Swamiji, you say that we decide our rebirth, in terms of what we shall be born as, to whom, where etc. Why are so many desperately poor and sad people out there? Why would they ever want to be born that way? People say that is their *karma*, which to me seems more acceptable.**

Yes, we do decide on our rebirth. Rebirth is decided by the mindset of your previous life. It is the accumulated effect of all the experiences that you have had in your earlier life, the *saṁskāras*. These *saṁskāras* leave a subtle footprint in your spirit when it leaves the body-mind system. This is called the *vāśana*.

If *vāśana* is a seed, *saṁskāra* is then a partly grown plant and *karma* is a fully grown tree. All these are to do with your desires. As long as you do not move out of your desires, *vāśana*, *saṁskāra* and *karma* bind you. *Karma* is not cause-effect as you think. It is not as if you do something that your religion or society labels as bad and you are born a pig, or if you do only good things, you will go to heaven. No.

There is no heaven and hell. These are what you create in your own mind. You live in hell throughout your life if you have a bad mindset. If you are always happy and carefree, you live in heaven.

Krishna says elsewhere that you are reborn based on what your last thoughts are. He means that you are reborn in line with your *vāsana*, or mindset. You may think, 'Ok, that is good, I shall think good thoughts when I die and I shall be reborn comfortably.' I tell you, if you have lived a miserable life fighting with everyone throughout your life, your last thoughts can be no different. In any case, you cannot plan your death and if you know you are going to die, you will not be able to think differently just because you are going to die.

If you were a miser all your life, your last thought will be of money. It will not even be positive; it will be only about hoarding money. If you had been a playboy all your life, your last thought will be about sensual pleasures only. There is no way you can avoid that.

So your question is, 'Why would anyone want to be born a beggar?' You remember the autistic boy I told you about, the one whom I didn't heal? Why was he born autistic? His spirit had decided that he had had enough responsibilities in his previous life. He just did not want any responsibility in this life. He would rather be a non-responsive person with no responsibilities; being taken care of.

A wealthy man in his previous life may have had enormous burdens and miseries that his spirit did not wish to repeat in its next body. He may have regretted accumulating wealth. He may have had money but may have been cast aside by his family and friends. He may have been miserable, so much so that he would not wish to be wealthy again. So, he is born poor.

Why do you assume that to be poor is to be unhappy? This is not at all true. I have met many people who are poor as it relates to money and do not know where their next meal is coming from, and yet they are wonderfully happy. It is the mindset. Material wealth does not guarantee happiness. Your state of happiness depends on how you treat wealth and poverty.

You may ask, 'Ok, I can accept your theory on being poor; but why would anyone want to be born terribly unhealthy and with painful diseases? Surely, this could not have been brought about by any desire.'

You can ask the people who live around me. Many of them have come to me with chronic and life threatening illnesses; some, just days before meeting me, have been told by doctors that they were going to die. But they have lived on. These

people, if you see, are the sincere seekers. They all would have had the same quest - Self-realization. In their previous births they must have missed the experience. For one reason or another, they would not have been able to live around a master, which would have helped them in their spiritual paths. After many such failures, their spirit would have decided that it would be born in a condition desperate enough to lead them to a master. What better than an incurable disease that only a master can heal? That is how we say even diseases are our choice!

So, you do decide your rebirth, as to what, how, where, and to whom.

In our second level meditation courses LBP 2 - Nithyananda Spurana Program, we take participants through the energy layers that the spirit passes through at the time of death. This program is in a sense a re-creation of one's death, and the participant literally feels reborn. In one of the sessions the participants work on what they think are their desires at that moment. When they do the meditation that takes them through that energy layer, they understand that most of what they assumed to be their desires were not real. They realize their true desires, the *vāsana*, the *prārabdha karma*, with which they were born into this world.



## Understand And Be Unaffected By Action

*4.13 Depending upon the distribution of the three attributes or **guṇas** and actions, I have created the four castes.*

*Yet, I am to be known as the non-doer, the unchangeable.*

*4.14 I am not affected by any work; nor do I long for the outcome of such work.*

*One who understands this truth about Me also does not get caught in the bondage of work.*

*4.15 All the wise and liberated souls of ancient times have acted with this understanding and thus attained liberation.*

*Just as the ancients did, perform your duty with this understanding.*

*4.16 What is action and what is inaction, even the wise are confused.*

*Let Me explain to you what action is, knowing which you shall be liberated from all ills.*

Now, we come to the controversial topic of the so-called caste system. Krishna says, 'I have created the four castes depending upon the distribution of the three *guṇas* or attributes.'

We have to understand a bit about the *guṇas*. The word '*guṇa*' can be roughly translated to mean 'attribute' or 'quality' that we are born with. It is a state of mind, and is also a reflection of the *prārabdha karma*, the *vāsana*, and the mindset with which we are born into this world. All people have all or at least one of the *guṇas* in them. There are three basic *guṇas* and they are: *satva* or purity, *rajas* or activity and *tamas* or inactivity.

So many people have quoted this one verse out of context for such a long time. People quote this verse whenever they want the support of religion for making the caste system more solid.

They say, 'Krishna Himself has sanctioned it' or, 'This system has been given by the incarnation Himself.' We should try to see and examine what Krishna actually meant. If we look a little more deeply into Krishna's words, we can see that He uses the words, 'depending upon the distribution of the three *guṇas*.' He does not say, 'depending upon birth.'

It is a fact, I can even say a truth - and there is a lot of difference between fact and truth - that no two persons on this planet earth can be the same. By the same token, every person is unique and possesses a unique ratio of the three *guṇas*.

Again, we have to note that Krishna does not discriminate. He does not say that this caste is superior, the other one is inferior and so on. He merely states that there are basically four kinds of people; the character of the person will be of that *guṇa* which is more dominant in him.

The same way that *guṇa* does not come by birth, *varṇa* (caste) too does not happen by birth. *Guṇa*, the mental attribute, is an inherent part of one's nature, carried over with the *vāsana* from previous births. Krishna says, 'Based on the *guṇa* one is born with, I decide on his *varṇa*, his caste.'

In the traditional *vedic* Hindu system of education, a guru, the master, took charge of children at an early age and trained them. He was not only the disseminator of knowledge to these children in what was known as the *gurukul* system, but he was also the decider of the career and future of each child. The guru evaluated the aptitude of each child under his care based on the child's mental attitude and attributes, the *guṇas*, and then decided on the vocation that the child should pursue. This decision was a very scientific process based on an evaluation of the attitude, aptitude, likes and dislikes of the child, supported by astrological studies.

The *varṇa* system was four-fold. *Brāhmaṇas* were the scholars and priests, intellectually inclined. *Kshatriyas* were the soldiers, nobles and kings, aggressive, ambitious and physically strong. *Vaishyas* were the business community, traders and businessmen with strong commercial acumen. *Shudras* were the workers, physically able and skillful.

Based on these skill sets, the children were trained. Based on their *guṇas*, not birth, they were trained for their vocations, their *varṇa* or caste. It was similar to

an assessment of aptitudes and guiding the children, but far more scientific than what is done today in the name of guiding.

Over time, as happens, this system was manipulated. Those who believed that they had a better *varṇa*, caste, decided they should make it a hereditary right, a birthright. This was an imposition of social and political evil, a misuse of power. Earlier, the system did not allow the son of a *brāhmaṇa* to be a priest if he was unsuitable or the son of a *kshatriya* to be a warrior if he was inadequate. But over time, with misuse of power, the caste itself became a birthright and such things started happening.

Krishna never condoned the system as it exists today.

Krishna states very clearly that only the one who transcends these three *guṇas* can reach His state, can reach the higher levels of consciousness. To reach Krishna one has to be a *triguṇa rahita*, beyond the three *guṇas*. Then, one becomes a non-doer, a no-caste, no-attribute person.

In the next verses, He elaborates on this aspect.

When a desire is fulfilled, it no longer creates ripples in the mind. Desires that get fulfilled are the basic needs that one is born with, which are the result of the carry-over *vāsana*, the *prārabdha karma*. We acquire all other desires by comparing ourselves with others. These are wants, not needs. Existence has no way of fulfilling such wants.

Ramana Maharshi says beautifully: The universe can fulfill the needs of all its inhabitants, but it cannot fulfill the wants of even one person. Wants never stop. They grow and grow. Want and greed only stop with death. Even then they continue to haunt us as the mental attitude, the carried-over *vāsanās*.

When one works out of basic need, he acquires no *karma*, since the desires get fulfilled and do not recur. Look at a poor man with just one pair of footwear. He is happy that he does not have to go barefoot. Till that footwear is worn out, he has no need for another one. In comparison, many of us acquire dozens of shoes, many of which we rarely wear. These purchases are born out of our wants, which can never be fulfilled. Nor will we ever get joy out of these possessions. Once acquired, they lose value and then we seek the next acquisition. The cycle goes on.

Have you ever seen a rich man sitting in a five star restaurant enjoying his meal in the same manner as a hard working manual laborer eating his simple

homecooked meal? The rich man will be more worried about the various illnesses he has and what he should not eat, than the quality of the food in front of him.

A person who has taken a conscious birth, and only a person who has taken a conscious birth, is aware of his *prārabdha karma*, the list of needs he is born with. Only he can extinguish his *karma* by fulfilling this list. Such a person has no attachment to his needs or the results of his action to fulfill these needs. These needs carry an energy of their own that gets them fulfilled. Once fulfilled, they leave no *karma* trace.

Krishna, the ultimate master, is always conscious. He of course has no *karma*, no unfulfilled desires, and no attachment. So it is with every enlightened master. His so-called desires get fulfilled as they arise.

When I desire food, it appears. When I feel the need to sleep, I rest. There is no gap between my desire and its fulfillment. There is no trace of that desire after it is fulfilled. The fulfillment is complete. The attachment is zero. Therefore, there is no *karma*.

This is the lesson every master tries to teach his disciples. Work from your needs, not from your wants. Act without attachment. You shall attract no *karma*. You shall be liberated.

**Q: Swamiji, even though Krishna may not have meant the caste system to develop the way it has developed in India today, it has become an evil practice. How can one accept this? It needs to be eliminated. Is it not?**

If you are looking for a socially acceptable answer, I am not the person to address this question to. If you are looking for a politically acceptable answer, I won't be able to satisfy you.

If you are looking for the truth, the truth is this.

Each of us is unique. We all have different strengths, and along with them some weaknesses as well. All societies are based on this uniqueness. That is why every society, every political structure and every religious organization has a leader to take decisions and to make it effective. If each of us were to lead an independent life, totally separate from each other's, living in forests and mountains, such structures may not be needed. In such a case the race will not survive either. The



moment man and woman start living as husband and wife to build a family, you start institutionalizing a family structure, with hierarchy and inequality.

Every society has its norms on how the hierarchy works. What you call a democracy is not equality. There are the rulers and the ruled. The ruled may live under the illusion that they appoint the rulers, but they are not equals; the same rules do not apply to both. Even in communism, there was no equality between the rulers and the ruled; there was only forced equality amongst the ruled. The rulers were dictators.

You say you are a democracy and everybody is equal. But some people are more equal than others! There are the rich and the poor and various shades in between. So your society is based on the power of money. In another country it may be based on the power of land ownership; in yet another, it is based on the power of connections or the power of education and so on. There is always an underlying basis to differentiate one person from another. Without this differentiation, organized society does not function.

In the *vedic* culture that prevailed in ancient India, this differentiation was based on aptitude. At an early age in the schooling system, called the *gurukul*, children were tested for aptitude and trained accordingly. It was not, as I mentioned before, based on birth, but it was based on aptitude. This is the best method I can think of, far better than bringing up a generation based on birth, or parents' wealth or family connections.

If it had not been for this caste system, the *vedic* culture would not have survived till today in India even to the extent it has. It is the *brāhmaṇa* communities in various locations, who even risking their lives, protected and nurtured this culture and preserved the knowledge. If centers like Chidambaram in the south of India and Varanasi in the north are repositories of *vedic* culture, it is mainly because of the *brāhmaṇa* community who acted in accordance with what they were taught to be their righteous duty.

Today, do people remember the contribution that they have made? Do they acknowledge the contribution made by the caste system to the preservation of the *vedic* culture? Do they realize that it is this *vedic* culture that will be India's differentiation and success factor in the world, now and in future?

It is said that Lord Macaulay, who visited India almost two hundred years ago on behalf of the Queen of England, declared after traveling through the whole country that he could not find a single beggar or thief. He recommended that to conquer India, the British had to destroy Her culture and education system. He

said that Indians would lose their self-esteem, start thinking that the English culture was superior and allow themselves to be ruled.

Whether this incident is true or not, this man was prophetic and that is what happened. The British destroyed the cultural base of India, far more definitively than the Moghuls before them. The British planted the seeds of hatred towards the caste system so that they could divide and rule. 'Educated' Indians gladly followed.

Let us not judge based on political and social prejudices, incited by some who have vested interests. In every form of society there will be some who feel disadvantaged. They will need something in that society to blame for their seemingly disadvantaged position.

In the USA for instance, can you ban wealth creation because the society is differentiated based on wealth and not all can be wealthy? That is what Russia and China tried for many decades and we now know the result.

I do not think abolishing the caste system is a solution. Removing the selfish motives that have been added to it is one solution. Building the *vedic* tradition of education is another solution. The *vedic* culture did not favour anyone based on caste. It enhanced one's capability to serve society based on this caste system. Our society can benefit from a proper understanding of this system, instead of trying to eliminate it. Even if you eliminate this, there will be another form of differentiation that will be neither different nor better.



## Action In Inaction And Inaction In Action

*4. 17 The complexities of action are very difficult to understand.*

*Understand fully the nature of proper action by understanding the nature of wrong action and inaction.*

*4.18 He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, is wise and a yogi, Even if engaged in all activities.*

*4.19 He who is determined and devoid of all desires for sense gratification, he is of perfect knowledge.*

*The sages declare such a person wise whose actions are burnt by the fire of knowledge.*

*4.20 Having given up all attachment to the results of his action, always satisfied and independent,*

*The wise man does not act, though he is engaged in all kinds of action.*

Here, Krishna says that the person who sees inaction in action and action in inaction has attained transcendence. When you see that it is not the 'I' in you that is doing the activities but it is the senses following their nature, when you see that it is the mind that is creating the false sense of identification of you with the action, then you have realized; you have attained transcendence because you are now no longer in the clutches of the mind.

It is the mind that makes you attached to something and repulsed by something else. When you are not in the clutches of the mind, you are free. You do actions because the senses by nature have to perform their functions. For example, the eyes see, the ears hear, the tongue tastes, the nose smells and the skin feels. Yet, you are

free from the bondage of action because you do not have any identification with the action; you do not have any emotional attachment to anything. So naturally, you are free and you are liberated and you can do what you are doing most beautifully without expecting any particular result or being bothered by the results of the action.

This is what it means to be 'unclutched'. Being 'unclutched' is the state where you are free and liberated.

Let me expand on the word 'unclutching' and what I mean by it:

If you observe your mind keenly, you will see that constantly, you are connecting all your thoughts and creating some links in your mind.

For example, the headache that happened ten years ago, the headache that happened five years ago, the headache that happened three years ago, the headache that happened yesterday, are all independent experiences that happened in your life. For the sake of easy reference, you categorize all these experiences in your mind into one category of 'headache'. It is archived just for utility purpose, to serve as a reference. It is just like how you file documents in your office in various categories, in various files. But what happens? By and by, you start believing that all these experiences are connected.

The suffering that happened ten years ago happened for a different reason, in a different place. It was a totally unique experience. The suffering that happened five years ago happened for a totally different reason. It was a completely different experience. The suffering that happened three years ago was again for a different reason.

Initially for the sake of ease, you archive them in the same place, for easy reference. By and by you start believing they are connected. When you start believing they are connected you create a shaft.

If you connect all the painful memories, you create a pain shaft and conclude, 'My life is suffering, my life is pain.' You start believing your whole life is a chain of suffering, a long chain of suffering. When you start believing that your whole life is suffering, you have created a pain shaft and you are waiting in your life only for painful incidents, so that you can elongate that shaft.

One more thing you should understand, whatever you believe, that is what you enhance also within you. If you believe something, you will again and again see

that in your life. That is why *vedic r̥sis*, sages, say that you create what you want. You create what you desire. By seeing, you create. Whatever you believe you will create and enhance.

Once you start believing that your life is a pain, you will wait unconsciously for painful incidents to strengthen that belief, to strengthen that judgment. We don't usually collect arguments to pass judgments; we collect arguments to support our judgments. The judgment is ready. We only collect arguments to support it. When you are clear that your life is a pain shaft, a big chain of pains, you are waiting for more incidents to support your faith, more incidents to support your belief.

Second thing, whenever you are adding the painful incidents unconsciously, constantly, you will be elongating that shaft, even though you may want to consciously end the pain by breaking it. If you believe your whole life is a shaft of joyful experiences, which we do very rarely, constantly you are in fear about whether the joy will continue. You wonder, 'Will it continue in the same way?'

If you believe life is a shaft of painful incidents, you do two things: Unconsciously you gather more and more incidents and strengthen your faith about how your life is painful, and consciously you also try to break the pain shaft! If you believe life is a chain of joyful incidents, unconsciously you will be in fear that it will end, and consciously you will try to prolong it. Understand that these are two big dramas we are continuously enacting with ourselves.

But the big difficulty, the important thing that we forget is that you can neither break the shaft nor elongate it, because the shaft itself does not exist! The shaft itself is your own imagination. You can neither elongate it nor break it. When you started archiving all the incidents in your life for the sake of easy reference, by and by you started believing that they are really existentially connected.

When you start believing that they are existentially connected, you believe your life as a pain shaft or a joy shaft. When you start believing life as a pain shaft you try to break it; when you believe it as a joy shaft, you try to elongate it. But one important thing you forget, you can neither break it nor elongate it because the shaft itself does not exist.

Just try this experiment:

Sit down for ten minutes with a pen and paper. Now, just start jotting down whatever thoughts come to your mind. Please do not edit your thoughts; write them down as they are. Do not judge yourself and do not try to control what

comes to your mind. If you try to judge, you are playing a hypocritical game with yourself, that's all. Just write down whatever comes.

Now, read whatever you have written. You can see for yourself how unconnected and illogical your thoughts are! You will be sitting here and thinking, 'I think I should go to my office tomorrow,' then the next minute, 'No, no no, I should just wake up and decide then,' then, 'What should I do about dinner tonight?'

Have you seen a fish tank? Have you seen how the bubbles rise up in a fish tank? There is a gap between one bubble and the next. But the gap is so small that it looks like a continuous stream. Just like the bubbles in a fish tank, our thoughts form in our mind, but there is a gap between one thought and the next thought in your mind as well. If you look a little deeply you will realize that your thoughts are independent thoughts like the independent bubbles. By their very nature, your thoughts are independent.

For example, if you see a dog in the street, suddenly you remember the pet you used to play with as a child. Then you will remember the teacher you studied with as a child, then you will think about where your teacher used to stay, and so on! If you look at it logically, you will see that the dog in the street and the teacher are not connected in any way. There is no logical connection, but your mind simply flows. If you look a little deep you will understand that your thoughts are illogical, independent and unconnected.

When you believe that your mind is logical, when you believe that your mind has got its own logic, you have created the first 'original sin' for yourself. That is the original sin. Believing that your mind is logical is the first sin.

Understand, by your very nature you are unclutched. By your very nature you are unconnected.

Connecting thoughts is like trashing all your emails and then picking up only some emails from the trash and reading them again. When I say trash mails, I mean the thoughts that have left you already. Every moment you are renouncing the thoughts by your very nature. A new thought can appear only when the old thought has been renounced. But even after renouncing them you try to pick up the thoughts from the dustbin and try to create a shaft with them. You feel that some valuable thoughts have been dropped in the dustbin, so you pick up some thoughts here and there. You pick up these thoughts from the dustbin, put them near your bed, spray a little perfume on them and keep them nice and pretty!

All you need to do is a few things. First, have a clear understanding that you are creating a shaft, a shaft of pain or a shaft of joy and trying to fight with it, by either trying to elongate it or by trying to break it. Second thing, you don't even have to unclutch yourself from the shaft because the shaft is imaginary. By your very nature, if you stop creating a shaft, you are unclutched. You don't need to unclutch.

Then we will start asking, 'If I unclutch, how will I do my job? How will I take care of my things? Will I not just lie in bed and waste my life? If I am unclutched, why should I go to work?' I ask you, why should you not go to your job?

The moment you say you will not go to work, it means you have a little hatred or a little vengeance against your job. That is why the moment you get some excuse you want to escape from your job! By saying all these things, you are expressing your anger, your violence against your routine, nothing else.

I always tell people, 'Fine, don't do anything; just be unclutched; for how many days will you be lying in your bed?' Maybe ten days, until your inactivity (*tamas*) gets exhausted. See, you have a certain amount of *tamas* in you. *Tamas* is one of the three attributes of purity, activity and inactivity. Until your *tamas* gets exhausted you will lie there, but after that what will you do? Naturally, you will start working and you will start moving! So do not be afraid; do not be afraid that if you are unclutched, you will not follow your daily routine.

That is what Krishna means by action and inaction. You cannot by nature be inactive. You will daydream, if nothing else! You will cling on to fantasies. You will try to escape from reality by deluding yourself, because your mind is clutching onto a soft and easy dream shaft.

When you truly unclutch, when you are in the present moment, without any attachment to the past and future, you will realize that you are full of energy. You just cannot keep quiet. You will have to do something. That 'something' will be dictated by your present moment awareness, not by fantasies. I tell you, what you think as 'you' is not necessary to run your day-to-day life. This is the basic truth. What you think as 'you' is not necessary to run your day-to-day life. This truth hurts us.

If you just observe yourself, if somebody is happily independent of us, we can't tolerate it, it is too much. Constantly we need to feel we are needed. That is why we expect people to project their sufferings on us and we too project our sufferings

on them, so that we feel important. What you think as 'you' is not necessary to run your day-to-day life.

People come and ask me, 'Constantly I repeat positive affirmations, 'I should stop smoking, I should stop smoking,' but it is not working. Why, *Swamiji*?'

All these creative visualizations create more and more trouble. Because in the very words, 'I should stop smoking', the word 'smoking' is contradicting the words 'I should stop'. You end up empowering the word 'smoking' as much as you are empowering the words 'I should stop'! Instead you should say, 'Let me have only healthy habits' or something totally positive without even the word 'smoking' in it.

Similarly, if you have a headache, instead of empowering the thought of the headache, you can do a very simple thing like deciding to have a glass of water. The moment you decide to have a glass of water, it becomes a fresh thought. The old thought of the headache has to disappear because the new thought of having water has to come into play, right? Once you keep replacing the thoughts, you break free from the headache-based thought patterns and eventually expel the headache from your system itself.

You may ask me, 'How can it be so simple, *Swamiji*?' It is simple. You are constantly taught that it is not so simple. It is simple. If you really understand, it is so simple. But soon after doing this, the thought of the headache may come back, then what do you do? Understand: your faith in it is what brings it back. This is the basic problem. You are so faithful towards the thought of the headache, that you forcefully drag it back into your system; you bring back a trashed file, that's all.

Think of it this way: If it comes back, it can go also, is it not? Why don't you celebrate those moments in which it left you? Why do you constantly remember the moments it came back?

People ask me again and again, 'I fail when I try to unclutch *Swamiji*.'

I ask them, 'Why are you connecting your past failure with your present failure?' When you connect all the past failures, you create one more shaft, 'failure'. The failure that happened nine years ago, the failure that happened eight years ago, the failure that happened yesterday are all independent incidents. Why do you connect all of them and expect the next experience also to be a failure?

Just relax and stop connecting and suddenly you will see such a deep inner healing happening in you, such deep peace happening in you. Suddenly you will



see that you have dropped out of the war, the constant running. Just relax. I tell you when you become a dropout, when you drop out of this war, when you drop from this whole game, suddenly you will realize that the whole thing is just a psychodrama happening. Because you are constantly supporting it, you are creating these shafts, that's all!

Try this simple meditation:

Just close your eyes and sit. Whatever words are rising in you, just let them rise. Just do not connect them with any other thought, that's all. Just don't create a shaft; simply unclutch.

If you feel bored, or if your mind asks you what to do, just unclutch from that thought as well. Do not even connect with that thought. Just sit, be unclutched. If your mind connects with a thought, just unclutch. Do not create, maintain or destroy any thought.

Try this for a few minutes and you will see the effect for yourself. Krishna says that to understand what action is, you need to understand what inaction is. In my programs, this is what I tell people. To understand what meditation is, you need to understand what meditation is not.

I spend a day and a half explaining what meditation is not and less than half a day explaining what meditation is. It is the same thing with healing too. For two full days people are taught what healing is not, with the help of a detailed manual! Then I come in and ordain the healers, which takes only half an hour!

When you unclutch, you are seemingly in inaction. However, the removal of the various shafts of pain, pleasure, fantasies etc, releases so much energy within you that you are now actively passive. You are at the height of potential energy, ready to release that energy for whatever purpose you decide in that moment.

If instead, you are actively daydreaming, caught in the shafts of fantasies and pleasures intermingled with sorrow and pain, you are seemingly active, very busy, but totally and uselessly busy. In fact, you are counterproductively busy as you are then pushing yourself deeper into more suffering.

In the process of unclutching, you transcend both action and inaction. You successfully destroy the false notion of the connection between the thoughts and rest in the present moment, the state of no-mind, the state of dropping thoughts. In this un-clutched condition, you are active and yet not attached to any activity. You are truly in Krishna consciousness.

All suffering and pain arise when we associate ourselves with the senses and the mind. The real Self in you is eternal, timeless, never changing. It is like this: When you see the clouds drifting in the clear sky, is the sky actually changing? No! The sky is like the canvas over which clouds of different forms and shapes drift across, sometimes completely covering the sky behind them, and sometimes drifting apart to reveal the sky behind.

When you travel in a train, have you looked out through the window? All the objects outside - the trees, the rocks, the buildings - everything seems to be in motion. It is relative motion that gives you this effect, this feeling that everything around you is moving. Just like this is *māyā*, delusion. It is because of that delusion it appears as if the Self is being affected by the emotions and the perceptions of the senses.

Just like how, when the clouds go over the clear blue sky, it appears that the sky is being covered by different types and colors of clouds, so also the Self is like the clear sky over which the clouds of different emotions pass.

If you see yourself in a clear lake or a mirror, what you see is a reflection of what is being projected, right? Just like that, in the lake of the Self, of the being, whatever quality is projected is what you will see reflected in the lake. Does it mean that the lake has become dirty? No! The reflection has no reality, no solid existence.

Actually, the Self is permanent. The Self in you, in me, in the person next to you is all the same. When everything is you, what is there to fear? Where is the question of conflict, jealousy, fear or greed?

Everything is you. Enjoy this world in its many forms and manifestations. Enjoy it in all these forms. However, enjoy without getting caught in attachment. Our senses are treacherous. They create addictions that overwhelm us. The more we have, the less we enjoy, and yet we cannot do without them. True wisdom is to step back from what the senses tell you, for they never tell you the truth.

Have you seen a person sell something, say a painting? You can see the seller busy trying to convince people, trying to get the best bargain. But see someone who is standing, witnessing this whole scene, someone who is neither interested in buying the painting nor in selling it. Only he can completely enjoy the painting!

This world is like a poem written by the great Poet and all there is in the poem are verses of infinite bliss!

A small story:

There was once a stag that was standing with its young one in front of a lake. The stag was looking at its own reflection in the water of the lake and telling the young stag, 'Son, see how powerful we are! Look at what we have been endowed with - long horns, strong feet, and sharp eyes. We are truly powerful.'

Just as the stag was talking, a dog jumped in front of the stag. The stag, in a split second, just leapt and ran instinctively out of fear.

Then the young stag asked its father, 'Father, what is the use of being powerful if we have to run away from the dog?'

When we are faced with a testing situation, we forget all the truths that we have taught ourselves as philosophy. Now, that does not mean that we do not accept the truth. It is just that we feel we are not strong enough to experience it. We need to persevere, fill the mind with the highest thoughts, the highest truths. Then, it can become an experiential reality in our lives.

See, without the right ideals, you may reach the goal, but it will take much longer. But if you have the right ideals, you will reach the truth much faster. When you take the help of those who have seen the truth, it is more intelligent to experiment with the techniques that they advocate.

We are taught that we are weak human beings, sinners. But the *vedic* sages have time and again declared, 'We are the children of immortality.' Let us be open to positive, affirmative thoughts rather than continuously repeating negative and self-defeating thoughts to ourselves. The positive thoughts are not mere statements. Understand that these are great truths that our sages have experienced, which they declare to us, encouraging us to experiment and experience as well. They are not mere words trying to convey an idea. With them come the energy and power of the experience that is possible for every one of us.

When we are blissful and centered within ourselves, we would never see anything disturbing outside, whereas an adult sees things in a different light because of his conditioned attachments and greed.

That is what Krishna says here: Be involved completely in the action yet be detached, independent and satisfied within. Then you can function beautifully, spontaneously, flowing in tune with the ultimate energy of Existence. Life then becomes a celebration. Every breath that you take, every single thing that you do is

an act of joy and an expression of the loving energy in you. Your joy is no longer dependent on what society says or thinks about you or your actions, because you are completely centered in yourself.

Whatever we do, whatever we think, we are subconsciously seeking concurrence and approval from the people around us in some subtle way. We are very keen that we should earn a good name from everyone. You may not accept this, but if you analyze deeply, you will see that you are not at ease without the appreciation and endorsement of the people around you. If you just sit down and note, in a day, how many things you do to get a good name, to maintain your reputation in society, you will realize what I am saying.

It is like a signature campaign that you are involved with in your whole life. All your activities, all your efforts are to get the signature of the others around you. In a big register, you make a column, 'Good Father' and then you do whatever is expected of you by your children and you ask for their signature under the column of 'Good father'. Then you go to your wife, to your boss, to your friends, you make the respective columns like 'Good husband', 'Good employee', 'Good friend', and then you do all the things that they expect you to do and ask for their signature under their columns. Of course, all these people also come to you for your signature in their registers under the columns meant for you!

Why do we bother so much about others' opinions about us? Why are we trying to derive strength from others all the time? The reason is, one, we don't know anything about ourselves. We know ourselves only through others' opinions of us. Second, when others give us their approval and attention, they are actually giving us energy. Attention is energy.

Be very clear, when you are dependent on external sources for energy, it only means that you are psychologically handicapped. When you need physical support, you are physically handicapped. When you need psychological support, you are psychologically handicapped, that's all. With physical handicaps, you know that you are handicapped because you can see it clearly, but with psychological handicaps, you don't even know that you are handicapped.

If you have seen children at play, you might have seen them build castles with cards. They will place the cards at a certain angle to each other and build several layers of such patterns in a pyramid shape. They happily build the pyramid and equally happily remove one card from the castle and watch the whole thing collapse! In fact, they will delight in the collapsing just as much as in the building!

Just like this, we build our own self-image like a castle out of people's opinions of us. We arrange all these certificates and signatures and build a castle to form our self-image. The image looks beautiful till a single person withdraws their certificate. Then what happens? The castle simply collapses! But unlike the children who rejoice, you start feeling miserable and unfit. At least in the case of the children, they build their castles with their own cards. But we build our castles with others' cards, others' certificates. So what do we do? We start working hard to maintain our 'castle'. We start behaving in such a way that people don't remove their certificates, so that people will think well of us. This is how we get enslaved.

Because you don't know anything about yourself, you turn to society for an answer. And society happily puts its labels on you, 'You are good-looking', 'You are a failure', and so on. It is like how a parcel without a proper address is pushed from place to place. We move around, collecting all the stamps that society puts on us. By and by we forget our true nature, and the fact that we are not the labels but the stuff inside the parcel.

The sage Ashtavakra says beautifully, 'Bondage is when the mind longs for something, grieves about something, rejects something, holds on to something, is pleased about something or displeased about something. Liberation is when the mind does not long for anything, does not grieve about anything, does not reject anything, does not hold on to anything and is not pleased about anything or displeased about anything. Bondage is when the mind is tangled in one of the senses and liberation is when the mind is not tangled in any of the senses. When there is no 'me', that is liberation, and when there is 'me' there is bondage. Consider this carefully and don't hold on to anything or reject anything.'

**Q: Swamiji, what you say is very difficult to practice even if we accept it. For instance, if we are injured and feel the pain now, it is the reality for us in this present moment. I do not need to link it to the past experiences. So how will I break out of the connectivity with pain?**

Treat the pain of the present as the pain of the here and now. Do not link it to pains that you had in the past and with the sufferings that you experienced then. They have no relevance to the present pain.

In Quantum Physics theories of today, they say that we collapse events that happen separated in space and in time into a current experience. These events are

separate events. They may or may not have been sequential. That does not matter. But the logical connection is somehow established in your mind.

If you feel pain, you normally would like to wish that pain away. You keep thinking again and again, 'I do not want this pain.' This does not work because your mind gets caught in the word 'pain'. It does not let go. So the pain does not go.

If you wish the pain to dissolve you need to focus on wellness. Do not associate the experience with the word 'pain' which has negative connotations in your mind. Instead, think about being well.

Better still, focus your attention on the pain. Watch the pain intensely but without ascribing the word 'pain' and the meaning 'suffering' to it. For a brief moment the pain may seem to intensify but then it will dissolve. Try it the next time you have any pain.

Pain is caused by the absence of attention to your body-mind system. It is your system telling you that it needs to be looked after. Pay attention, close attention to it. It will feel better and the pain will go away.

Another thing is that pain and suffering are two different things. Pain affects the body. Suffering affects the mind. You can have pain in your body and yet have no suffering. Body pain cannot be avoided, as it is physical, but mental suffering is your own creation.

When you unclutch, when you stop linking with the past, what disappears is the suffering. Each experience is viewed as a new one with no past association. You will find that this is not so difficult to do. You need some practice, that's all.



## Equanimity In Success And Failure

*4.21 The person who acts without desire for the result; with his consciousness controlling the mind,*

*Giving up all sense of ownership over his possessions and body and only working, incurs no sin.*

*4.22 He who is satisfied with profit which comes of its own accord and who has gone beyond duality, who is free from envy,*

*Who is in equanimity both in success and failure, such a person though doing action, is never affected.*

*4.23 The work of a liberated man who is unattached to the modes of material nature and who is fully centered in the ultimate knowledge,*

*Who works totally for the sake of sacrifice, merges entirely into the knowledge.*

*4.24 The offering, the butter offered to the supreme in the fire of the supreme is offered by the supreme.*

*Certainly, the supreme can be reached by him who is absorbed completely in action.*

*4.25 Some yogis worship the gods by offering various sacrifices to them,*

*While others worship by offering sacrifices in the fire of the supreme.*

A sense of ownership over possessions and over your body is the same thing. What can you say are your possessions? You came with nothing at all. Can you claim that you were born with anything that is your own property? In the same way, you are going to leave this world also empty-handed. Can any of you say

that all your possessions and wealth and luxuries will go with you when you leave this body? No!

People ask me, ‘Swamiji, why do you wear *sherwani* (a traditional North Indian dress) and jewelry?’ I normally wear these two pieces of saffron cloth and the only jewelry I wear is these *rudrākṣa* (sacred seed) beads. But when I am going for some discourses or for a specific event, maybe a corporate event, according to the occasion, I wear *sherwani*. I tell them, ‘This body itself is a covering, a cloth for me; how does this second covering of clothes matter?’

This very *prāṇā*, the very life breath that is going inside your body through the air that you breathe is not your property. It is the property of Existence. Your very life is a sheer gift to you from Existence. When you realize this, you will immediately see that all your fears and worries and greed are so baseless. You are running behind something, thinking it is yours, but of what relevance is it really? When your very life is a gift to you, how can you claim that anything else is your possession?

One more thing: Real knowledge comes by experience, not through words, not just by talking about it. Let me tell you, the moment you imbibe a single point of truth or any single dimension of truth in any way, if you catch a single idea and imbibe it honestly, truthfully, it can do wonders for you.

Vivekananda says beautifully, ‘Even if you memorize all the books in all the libraries of this world, it will not help you in any way other than increasing your ego about the book knowledge that you have. Instead of having a whole library in your head, just realize five concepts in your heart.’

I tell you, use only one idea and try to imbibe it in your being, experience it in your life. Your life will be transformed by even a single idea, just one idea.

In Tamil Nadu, South India, they describe beautifully the lives of 63 enlightened masters in a book. The name of the book is *Periapurānam*. If you study the lives of the masters in this book you will find that there are some masters who did not really do anything. They would have just plucked flowers and offered them to God, nothing else. Yet they achieved enlightenment! It is not what you do that is important. How honest you are with the act is what really matters. When they did the act of offering flowers, they were true and honest to the action.

You may ask, ‘We also offer flowers everyday and do all possible things, but we are not enlightened. The only thing we get is the extra expense of maintaining the garden or buying the flowers!’ The problem is, we are not honest. When these



masters plucked flowers to offer to God, they were thinking of Him to whom they were offering the flowers. They were totally devoted to the thought of the Lord and there was nothing else that was distracting them.

When we pluck flowers, even if it is to offer to a favorite deity, we are thinking of something else, somebody else. I have seen these people who do rituals regularly. Whenever they are doing any rituals, they will be thinking of something else. Their thoughts are either in their office or in their home. I have seen these people who regularly chant the 1000 names of the gods and goddesses as in the Vishnu sahasranāma and Lalitha sahasranāma. The moment they start chanting, they start looking at the index number of the verse that they have reached. They are desperate to see how far they have read and how much remains to complete the chanting.

The attitude, the intention, and the thoughts behind the action actually decide the energy behind the action, however it may look externally. The power of thought is immense. In fact, some of the latest research shows how our DNA can be influenced and reprogrammed by words and frequencies. It has actually been studied that when a number of people focus their thoughts on something similar, like during Christmas or the football World Cup, certain random number generators in computers start to deliver ordered numbers instead of the random ones.

I tell you, all the so-called natural calamities are nothing but the effects of global negative thoughts. Your thoughts and energy directly affect your body, your cell structure, your decisions, your capacity to fulfill your decisions, the outer world incidents, even accidents. You create a mental setup that creates and attracts similar incidents to you.

If you can change your mental setup from greed and fear, which is what we have normally, to one of bliss, or *ānanda*, then your energy flow will start brimming and your thoughts will be much clearer and more in the present. When you do this, you have every power to control the outer world incidents because you and Existence have a very deep connection at the energy level. When you are blissful, when your mental setup is not one of worry, fear and greed but one that is in the present, always joyful, you will automatically attract all good things to yourself.

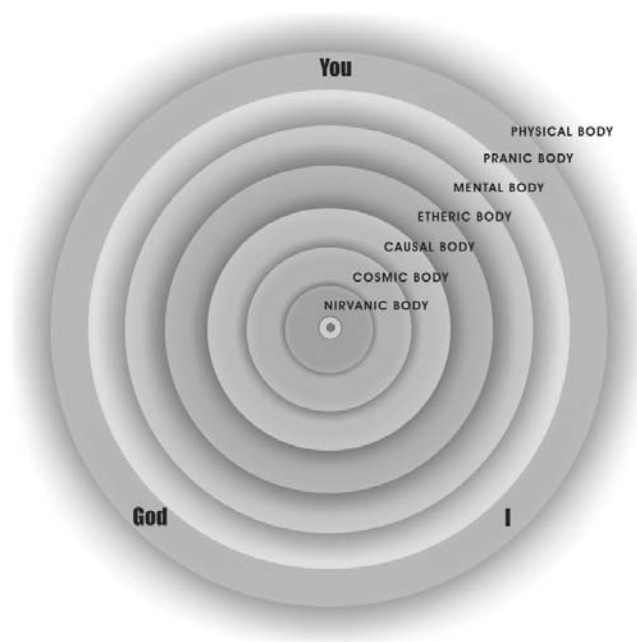
One more thing: All our minds are not individually separated pieces of the universe. They are all one and the same. All our minds are interlinked. Not only interlinked, they directly affect each other. This is what I call the 'collective consciousness'. Though each one is independent in his consciousness, when one is conscious of one's true nature, one feels as if one is part of the whole universe.

Each one's thoughts straightaway affect the others around. Your thoughts are more infectious than your cold. If you catch a cold from someone, you may suffer physically for a few days and then get over it. But when you catch thoughts from people, not only do you suffer mentally but you suffer forever also.

Not only are those who are staying around you touched by your thoughts, everyone who is living on the planet earth is touched by your thoughts.

The next truth: Not only at the mental level are you connected; even at the deeper conscious level you are connected to every other being. Your body is not just one body. Actually, there are seven layers or bodies.

The first layer is the physical body. The second is the *pranic* body. There are seven such energy layers or bodies. These energy layers can be represented as concentric circles, with the physical layer as the outermost circle and the seventh layer, the *nirvanic* body as the innermost.



We go into complete detail about these seven layers or bodies during the Nithyananda Spurana Program (NSP), our second level meditation program, now called Life Bliss Program Level 2 or LBP 2.

Now, at the physical layer, you, God and I can be represented as three different points in the outermost concentric circle. At the physical level, the distance is so much. If you come down a little, to the *pranic* level, the distance is reduced. If you come down deeper, to the mental level, the distance between you and I is still reduced and so is the distance between you, God and I. When you go deeper and deeper, these three entities finally merge into one at the innermost *nirvanic* layer. Please be very clear that at the deepest point of all these layers, God, you and I are one. There is no distance between the three.

Once you become aware and realize that you are a part of the collective consciousness, that you don't have an individual identity; you realize that you do not have a separate ego.

You think you own your individual identity. In Existence, there is no such thing as a separate individual identity. Once you know this truth, you go beyond pain, suffering, depression and diseases.

Understand this: As long as you are individually conscious, you will be continuously suffering. Why do you think you are continuously resisting Nature? Whatever Nature offers, you resist.

There is a beautiful saying:

Mind as a rule is a fool  
When it is hot, asking for cool  
When it is cool, asking for hot  
Always asking for what is not!

When it is cool, you resist. You think you are different from Existence. I have seen *sanyāsīs*, monks, living in the Himalayas, living almost nude in the cold, in the snow. I have myself lived in such conditions, but the body was never disturbed. I never had a problem. I never thought that I was different from the atmosphere, never had the feeling of separation from Nature. When you start thinking that you are different from the atmosphere, from the air that is around you, you start resisting it.

The other day I read an interesting interview with this man who survived his jump into the Niagara Falls. If you have been to the Niagara Falls, you can understand the enormity of the fact that someone survived jumping into it. I cannot imagine someone surviving that jump. He says beautifully, 'When I jumped, I became a part of the Niagara Falls. I felt like I was a part of it. I never felt that I was different from the Falls.'

When you are in tune with the collective consciousness, when you become a part of the collective consciousness, Nature is with you, Nature is your friend and it will protect you. Nature will not harm you. As long as you think that you are an individual consciousness different from Nature, it will protest. As long as you are in tune with the collective consciousness, Nature protects you.

A very simple thing that you can practice now.

If you are feeling cold, just relax, identify the area where you are feeling cold, witness that area. In that area, don't resist the atmosphere, don't resist the air, don't resist the temperature, don't resist Nature and don't resist Existence. Just say to yourself, 'I am not going to resist Nature, I am not going to resist the temperature. I am not going to resist Existence. Let me relax.' Be conscious and decide. With this you will see the body relaxing and the idea of cold disappearing from that part and you become completely comfortable. When you think you are something different from Nature, you are disturbed by Nature.

The Whole, the universe, is a hologram of which you are a part. Just as in a hologram every single part reflects the totality of that hologram even if it is split, you reflect the totality of the Whole that is the universe.

Another example: When a living person dies of drowning, the dead body floats. The dead body is heavier than water. Yet, it floats. But a living body, which may be lighter, does not float. It drowns. Why do you think this is so? As long as you are living, you are not able to relate with water. Your ego prevents that. Your mind prevents that. In a dead body there is no mind and no ego and so it floats.

Wherever you want to achieve success, in a social or in an economic context, only when you feel in tune with the whole group and fall in tune with the collective consciousness, will you be able to achieve what you want to achieve. As long as you feel you are an individual, as long as you have an idea that you are somebody, an identity, be very clear that you will be resisted and you will be resisting. Whether it is in the home, at office or workplace or industry, this will happen.

If you disappear into the collective consciousness, you will be again and again protected and taken care of. You will attain complete success, not only socially and economically, but you will experience a deep feeling of fulfillment.

As long as you resist the current, whether it is your workplace or your house or your company or any place for that matter, as long as you do not disappear into the collective consciousness, you will be continuously creating hell for yourself and for others.

Even in the physical layer, if you think you are separate, be very clear, you will be inviting diseases. One more thing, in the mental layer, if you think you are separate, if you think you are an individual, again and again you will be sowing seeds of violence. Seeds of violence will be created when you feel you are an individual. With collective consciousness, you unify, but with individual consciousness you dissect, you cut things into pieces.

Logic always breaks while intuition always unites. At the soul level, if you think you are an individual, there is no possibility for any spiritual growth.

First thing, at the physical level, you are not an individual. Your body and the body of the sun are directly connected. Any small change in the body of the sun can make changes in your body. Any small change in your body can change the body of the moon. Even if you are not able to logically relate to this, it is true.

In the mental layer also, you are not alone. Any thought which is put in anyone else's head comes and touches you and any thought created in your mind goes and touches someone else. Any thought sown by someone can touch you and affect you.

It is like ripples created in the water in a lake. If you are creating a strong wave, you will be creating an impression with your thought. You will be leading and inspiring others with your thought. If your thoughts are not solid enough, other waves will impress you.

Either you live like a leader or you will be a follower. There is no in between. You always think, 'I will not be a leader, I cannot do that much; I will not be a follower either; I shall maintain my own stand.' This is simply impractical. There is no such thing as 'my own stand'. Either you lead or you follow.

In the mental level also, again and again, if you think you are an individual, you will be resisted. The moment you understand that you are a part of the collective consciousness, you will not be resisted but will actually be welcomed and accepted.

In the ultimate way, at the spiritual level, the moment you understand that you are deeply connected, totally connected, intensely connected to the whole universe, not only do you start experiencing bliss, but you also start really living, opening many dimensions of your being.

See, with just this one body, you can think so much and enjoy so much. If you disappear into the collective consciousness, you will experience so many dimensions, so many possibilities, you cannot imagine!

Now that you feel you have just one body, you are enjoying this much. Imagine what you can do if you have two bodies. And just imagine what you can do when you have so many bodies! Imagine three different bodies in different countries enjoying different cultures. Similarly if the multitudes of bodies increase, so would the joy, the bliss. This same thing you will experience when you are a part of the collective consciousness.

During the Indian festival of Holi, *rās pūrnīmū*, Radha and the *gopīs* (women devotees of Krishna) experienced the collective consciousness of Krishna. This is referred to as *rās līlā*, when Krishna gave them the experience of collective consciousness. We have a very wrong idea about this *rās līlā*. We think that this *rās līlā* is something where Krishna had a relationship with so many women. This is a very wrong interpretation. Krishna was just ten years old then! We tend to forget that!

We have not read the original scriptures and have come up with our own conclusions. We pick up and support what we want. We just want some support from some scripture and some master so that we can do something behind his back. So we just start blaming Krishna. What happened actually was that He gave the experience of collective consciousness to the whole group of *gopikās* and Radha. This collective consciousness is what I call God.

Throughout our second level meditation program - LBP Level 2 course, you will realize that you are a part of the collective consciousness. Not only that you are a part, but that you *are* the collective consciousness. You are not an individual consciousness as you think. Layer by layer when we go deeper and deeper, you will realize that you are just one with everything. So automatically the diseases disappear. You start feeling the well-being in the mental layer, the *pranic* layer, the etheric layer, the physical layer and all the other layers.

You are like an onion. If you peel the onion layer by layer, what is inside? Just emptiness! The onion thinks it has got something solid but when it is opened layer by layer, it is empty. Similarly, you think that you are an individual consciousness, but if you peel the individual layers, you will experience that you are nothing but the cosmic consciousness, the collective consciousness!

In LBP 2, that is what we do, the opening of your minds. You are asked to write for yourself, about your pains, desires, guilt and pleasures. You will not be showing your notes to anyone else. People ask me why I ask them to write all this when they already know it. I tell people that by writing them down, they are

opening their minds in my presence. When they open their minds, I can heal their minds.

First of all you should understand that I do not heal. My presence heals. When the sun rises, the lotus blooms by itself. The sun need not go and open the petals of the lotus. Similarly, in the presence of the master, healing happens. Healing is not done, it simply happens. I can heal your body while it is in my presence.

In the same way, if you open your mind, it can be healed. If you open it, the sun can heal it; the energy heals all the wounds. LBP 2 is about opening up your energy layers one by one. Your pains, pleasures, guilt and desires are opened up. When they open up, you experience God. Not only do you search for God, but you experience God as well. Pure mind is God itself and not something separate from it.

We are all taught from childhood that there is a purpose to life. We are guided to work towards goals in life, which are almost always material goals. We are expected to live up to the expectations of our parents, later our teachers, much later our spouses and finally our children.

Understand, there is no purpose to life, except to live. The purpose of life is to enjoy life. How can we enjoy life if we get saddled with a bagful of goals that bind us down to duties, responsibilities and obligations? We are so stressed out by all that is expected of us that we have no time to enjoy what we are doing.

Life is not about purpose; life is not about goals. Life is not lifestyle. Life is not about impressing people about how rich or how clever or how beautiful or how skilled you are. Life is about enjoying the journey of life. It is not about the stress of looking for the destination. When the path is right, when you enjoy the path, the destination is always right; it will always be enjoyable.

Only the person who realizes the purposelessness of life can be satisfied in any action with whatever profit comes from that action of its own accord. Understand: Life has no purpose but it has a meaning. All the time, we are taught that life has a goal, a purpose, and we run behind various goals hoping to achieve satisfaction in life. But life has no goal; the very life, the very path itself is the goal. When you realize this, you relax into the present and are not affected by success or failure.

All this jealousy and envy also comes when you think that life has a goal and somebody else has been given something more than you to reach the goal. When you understand that you are unique and Existence has equipped you with all that you need to fulfill all your desires, you will actually be able to live life. Otherwise,

you will only be running behind some goal or the other. You will envy others who you think are closer to that goal towards which you are running. You will be caught in this roller-coaster of success and failure.

Understand that the goal of life is like a mirage. It does not exist in reality, but it continuously creates illusions of its existence. Live life every moment in bliss; enjoy it from moment to moment and you can see the tremendous difference it makes to the very quality of your life.

A small story:

This has happened according to the mythological stories in my native place, Tiruvannamalai, a spiritual nervecenter in India. That place is a spiritual incubator. Just like how premature babies need an incubator to supply air and all the basic things, in the same way, for an enlightened being to land on planet earth, you need a spiritual incubator to protect and help them.

The story goes that once Shiva appeared as an infinite column of light to settle a dispute between Brahma, the Creator, and Vishnu, the Sustainer as to who was greater. As per Shiva's orders, Brahma had to find Lord Shiva's head and Vishnu, the Sustainer, was asked to find Shiva's feet. Whoever found their part first would be declared the greater one. The story is beautiful and it has a beautiful meaning. Who is Brahma? He is the consort of Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge. Who is Vishnu? He is the consort of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. The story says that Brahma started searching for the head. Vishnu started searching for the feet. Vishnu came back after some time and accepted, 'I am not able to find Your feet; please forgive me. I only now realised that it is an impossible task!' Brahma also realized he would not be able to find Shiva's head. But instead of accepting the fact, he decided to cheat. He took a flower as a false witness to testify that he had touched and brought it from Shiva's head.

You need to understand the story: Vishnu is the embodiment of wealth. Brahma is the embodiment of intellect. Neither by wealth nor by intellect can you achieve enlightenment. That is the truth of the story. Neither by wealth nor by intellect can you achieve enlightenment.

One more important thing: If you travel in the line of wealth, you will get frustrated, you will understand, you will face depression of success and you will become really humble. You will fall and you will understand. This is symbolised by



Vishnu surrendering first. But if you travel in the line of intellect, you will never accept that you are defeated. This is symbolised by Brahma bringing a false witness in order to escape defeat.

If you travel in the line of externally focused ego, or the path of material success in the outer world, at least at one point you will understand. You will experience depression of success. You will say, 'Enough! Let me rest. I understand that enlightenment can never be achieved in this line.'

But the person who travels in the line of internally focused ego or the line of intellect, not only does he never achieve, he will not even be able to understand that he cannot achieve. The intellect, the ego becomes so sharp, so subtle; it will bring false claims and false techniques to say that he has achieved it. Those false claims are only these false flowers, the false witnesses.

The ultimate knowledge can be reached only through sincerity, not through intellect or wealth. Then you are not caught in running behind the senses, behind the inner world or the outer world.

Now, Krishna talks about the different kinds of sacrifices:

This is a beautiful verse similar to the Upaniṣad verse:

*Om pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidam pūrṇād pūrṇamudacyate I  
pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇameva 'vaśiṣyate II*

The Whole is full. From the Whole, if the Whole is removed, what remains is still the Whole.

In mathematics, there is a similar analogy: from infinity, if you remove infinity, what remains? What remains is still infinity!

People often ask me, 'Who created the universe?' I tell you, the universe itself is the creator. The creation, creator and created are not three separate things. The universe itself is the creator, the created and the process of creation.

See, if there is somebody creating the universe, then that means the creator is intelligent and the created and the creation are not. But the universe is intelligence. The universe, the cosmic energy is intelligence and that itself pervades the universe.

You and I are manifestations of this cosmic energy. We are creations of the cosmic energy. But what does 'manifestations of the cosmic energy' mean? The intelligent cosmic energy pervades our very beings. The cosmic energy is the

creator, so, we are the creator as well. The creator, the creation and the created are all the same; they are not separate identities.

Earlier I had talked about this Tamil scripture called Periyapuranam. Periyapuranam describes the lives of 63 Nāyanmārs. These Nāyanmārs were great Shiva devotees. They were more than devotees; they were disciples of Shiva, though Shiva was not physically present to teach them. The energy of Shiva was enough to teach and fulfill them.

One of these Nayanmaars did nothing in his life except pluck flowers and offer to Shiva. Another sang songs. In whatever they did they offered themselves to Shiva completely. They sacrificed themselves and their actions to their beloved Shiva. They were so completely absorbed in that activity, whether it was gathering flowers or singing songs or whatever else it was, that nothing else remained in their mind and thoughts.

Even the physical presence of Shiva was not relevant to these Nayanmaars. They were consumed by the energy of Shiva. They sacrificed themselves in the fire of Shiva. They were one with Shiva. For them, the creator, creation and created were one and the same.

In the same manner, the *gopīs* of Brindavan immersed themselves in Krishna. Nothing but Krishna was visible to them. Radha, the epitome of all *gopīs*, asks a friend. 'Why is it that wherever I look, and whatever I look at, I see only Krishna?'

The friend says so beautifully, 'Radha, that is because you wear Krishna as your very eye shadow! Whatever you see is only that eye shadow that is Krishna.' A true devotee not only sees God in everything, but is also ready to sacrifice anything for His sake. We shall see the various kinds of sacrifices in the next few verses.

*Q: Swamiji, you said that in the innermost energy layer, the nirvanic layer, God, you and I are all one, and that one realizes one's divinity. In the LBP 2 course, you teach this as a part of one's death process. Can one achieve this state while still alive?*

A very good question and the answer is, of course, you can.

In the LBP 2 course - the Nithyananda Spurana Program, we do teach techniques to go through each of these seven energy layers. These are the layers

that the spirit passes at the time of death. The first four layers are within this life span. Even part of the fifth is. Every day you move from your gross body through your subtle body into your causal body.

The gross body is the physical body in the waking state. The subtle body is your dream body, where you are when you dream at night. The causal body is where you are when you are in deep sleep. The causal body or layer is close to death. Every day you do travel to death and come back. This is the process that refreshes you, rejuvenates you and revitalizes you. In fact, if you lose this for a few days you will die of tiredness.

Once the spirit crosses the causal layer, it cannot return. The causal layer is a dark passage that is the transition point between this world and the reality beyond. This darkness of the causal body corresponds to the darkness of the mother's womb, which is where the departed spirit travels and assumes a new body.

We take you through this journey to rid you of the fear of death and to dissolve all your engraved memories that condition you. In this LBP 2 course, you work on all your *saṃskāras*, the engraved memories that cause you all the suffering. You expel your negativities. You are born anew.

At the next level, when you come for the Healer's Initiation program, you are taught how to reach the layers beyond the causal layer while you are still living!

When the Nithya Spiritual Healers go into meditation, they reach the highest level of energy, the seventh layer of *nirvanic* energy. They do this every time they meditate. They can be in meditation all the time. So they can be in the *nirvanic* layer of energy all the time! The healing energy of the cosmos flows through them and heals.

So you don't have to die to reach the *nirvanic* layer of energy. All that you need to do is open your body-mind system to allow the energy to come into you.



## Know The Meaning Of Sacrifice and Be Purified

*4.26 Some sacrifice the hearing process and other senses in the fire of equanimity*

*And others offer as sacrifice the objects of the senses, such as sound, in the fire of the sacrifice.*

*4.27 One who is interested in knowledge offers all the actions due to the senses,*

*Including the action of taking in the life breath into the fire of yoga, and is engaged in the yoga of equanimity of the mind.*

*4.28 There is the sacrifice of material wealth, sacrifice through penance, sacrifice through yoga*

*And other sacrifices, while there is sacrifice through self-study and through strict vows.*

*4.29 There are others who sacrifice the life energy in the form of incoming breath and outgoing breath,*

*Thus checking the movement of the incoming and outgoing breaths and controlling the breath.*

*4.30 There are others who sacrifice through controlled eating and offering the outgoing breath, life energy.*

*All these people know the meaning of sacrifice and are purified of sin or **karma**.*

*4.31 Having tasted the nectar of the results of such sacrifices, they go to the supreme eternal consciousness.*

*This world is not for those who have not sacrificed. How can the other be, Arjuna?*

**4.32** *Thus, there are many kinds of sacrifices born of work mentioned in the Vedas.*

*Knowing these, one will be liberated.*

In all these verses, Krishna talks about the various types of sacrifices. You should know that when we say 'sacrifice', it is not just the *act* of giving, but the *attitude* of giving. This understanding is important. Otherwise, you may do everything, following all the rituals according to the scriptures, but you will miss out on the real intent for which the ritual or the act had to be done.

A beautiful story from the Bhagavatam, the ancient Hindu epic:

Once, Krishna was playing with his friends. After playing, his friends were tired and they asked Krishna, 'O Krishna, we are feeling hungry. Please tell us where we can go for food.' Krishna replied, 'Go to the nearby hall where learned *brāhmanas* (priests) are performing a great ritual to attain heaven. Tell them that you have been sent by me and request them to give you some cooked rice.'

Krishna's friends went as directed by Krishna to the *brāhmanas* and asked them, 'Krishna sent us here. We are hungry and Krishna asked us to seek food from you.'

The *brāhmanas* were all caught up in the rituals and sacrifices according to the prescribed procedures. They did not, however, know the intent of the sacrifice. The very divine energy for which the sacrifice was being made was asking for an offering, but the *brāhmanas* could not realise that. They did not give the boys any food.

Krishna's friends returned disappointed and came back and told Krishna what had happened. Krishna, on hearing about the foolish *brāhmanas*, just laughed and said, 'Now, go to the innocent wives of these *brāhmanas* and ask them the same thing.'

The friends now went to the wives of the *brāhmanas* and told them, 'O ladies, we have been sent here by Krishna who was playing with us nearby. We are hungry and have come to you for food.' The ladies, on hearing that

they had been given such a wonderful opportunity to serve, gathered all the food from their houses and rushed to feed Krishna and his friends.

The very act of service, the welcoming attitude is what is important.

There is a beautiful verse in the Mahabharata that says, 'A guest comes with all the gods. If the guest is honored, so are the gods; if he goes away disappointed, the gods are disappointed too.'

That is why in Sanskrit, we say, '*atithi devo bhava*', the guest is God. '*Tithi*' means date and the prefix 'a' negates it. Therefore, one who arrives unexpectedly without a prior date or appointment is the *atithi* or guest.

When somebody comes unexpectedly also, serve him. That is a real welcoming attitude. The word used for ritual giving in Sanskrit is '*dāna*', which means sharing, imparting.

*Ayurveda* speaks of four kinds of defects which can afflict cooked food: the defect of time (*kāla doṣa*) which affects it when the food has been kept for too long, the defect of flavor (*rasa doṣa*) which causes the food to lose its taste, the defect of company (*samsarga doṣa*) when it is touched by unclean hands, or in which some insect has fallen, and the defect of sentiment (*bhāva doṣa*) which affects the food when it is offered with ill grace or without affection. Such food is not food; it is poison and is the worst out of the four categories.

The true meaning of sacrifice lies in the meaning with which it is done. Look at the trees. They live for the welfare of others, themselves facing the stormy winds, heavy showers, heat and snow, all the while protecting us from them. They never turn away anyone coming to them. They don't turn their back even on the man who is coming to fell them. They give shade and fruits and flowers to that man as well. All their many parts, leaves, flowers, fruits, shade, roots, bark, wood and fragrance, are useful to others.

A small story:

Once a small girl had a dreadful disease. Her five-year-old brother had just recovered from it.

The doctor said to the boy, 'Only a transfusion of your blood will save your sister. Are you ready to give her your blood?'

The boy got frightened. He hesitated for a while, then said, 'Ok, doctor.'

The transfusion was completed and after some time the boy slowly asked the doctor, 'Doctor, when will I die?' Only then the doctor understood the boy's fear! The boy thought that by giving blood he was giving his life for his sister.

The little boy thought that by giving blood to his sister, he will die. But even then he was ready to sacrifice his life for her! When you give away something that you cannot afford to give, only then it is a true sacrifice. When you give away something that you can afford to give, then it is not a true sacrifice. A wealthy man giving away alms is not sacrificing anything. He may be doing a good deed; that is all.

Krishna mentions many forms of sacrifice here. He talks of sacrifices of material wealth, yoga and penance - a combination of material, physical, mental and spiritual sacrifices. When a person does these at some cost and pain to himself, they would be genuine sacrifices. Otherwise they would merely be meaningless rituals.

However, even that which is given away by someone who can afford what he is giving, if done with good intentions, would result in gains to that person. His very intention would alter his mindset and liberate him. A person who does not believe in sharing his wealth will not only not enjoy his wealth in this life, but will also suffer in future births as a result of his mental makeup.

When one sacrifices whatever is dear and whatever is difficult to give away, he enters a completely different plane of sacrifice, one that liberates the person. Such a person enters a plane of true non-attachment, leading to liberation.

***Q: Swamiji, many rich people may give with selfish intent, but those who benefit do not see the intent. They see just the benefit. If one insists on noble intentions while giving, very little may then be given. This will only affect those who need it most. What to do then?***

Whether now or in Krishna's time, what you say has been true. Most givers give to boost their ego, or give so that they can receive more than what they give. All the great kings of Krishna's age conducted sacrifices as rituals, more to enhance their status than from any deep sense of selflessness.

Nothing can be done about this. That is the way the world is. Before he gives away any money for any charitable purpose, the CEO would like to make sure that

the photographer is ready and waiting and that the picture is published in the next day's papers.

The entire meaning of sacrifice is lost in the process. What is there to sacrifice then? What is happening is a business deal. Let us say you practice yoga purely for health reasons, for being fit. It is not the sacrifice of breath or life force that Krishna is talking about here. When each breath is surrendered to the cosmic energy, from where it actually originates, with complete awareness and understanding of this truth, it becomes a sacrifice.

Krishna is guiding those who wish to advance in their path to Self-realization on what to do. He is not stopping those who give for selfish reasons. He outlines how those who give selflessly benefit by moving towards eternal consciousness.

Ramakrishna has said that if you keep repeating the word Gita you end up saying *tyāg* or *tyāgi*, which means sacrifice! The entire focus of the Gita is sacrifice or non-attachment. This is the key issue here. Giving without expecting something in return, leads to doing everything without expecting anything in return. In turn this leads to doing what you have to do without worrying about what you can get out of it, what will happen if you don't do it, and how you can get more out of it.

By learning to give without expectation, you break the bondage of expectations. This liberates you.

Do not worry about other people or how the rest of the world will survive. This universe has survived for eternity, not just some billions of years as scientists estimate it. It will survive such people also. When you understand Krishna's words, try to follow them. Give without asking, sacrifice without intent. This will uplift you. It will take you into *nityānanda*, eternal bliss.





## You Are No Sinner

*4.33 O conqueror of foes, the sacrifice of wisdom is superior to the sacrifice of material wealth.*

*After all, all activities totally end in wisdom.*

*4.34 Understand these truths by approaching a spiritual master, by asking him your questions, by offering service.*

*The enlightened person can initiate you into wisdom unto you because he has seen the truth.*

*4.35 O Pandava, knowing this you will never suffer from desire or illusion,*

*You will know that all living beings are in the supreme, in Me.*

*4.36 Even if you are the most sinful of all sinners,*

*You will certainly cross completely the ocean of miseries with the boat of knowledge.*

We spoke about the story of Brahma and Vishnu trying to reach Shiva's crown or head. Vishnu was able to accept that he failed, whereas Brahma could not. This symbolically indicates that a wealthy person (symbolized by Vishnu) realizes the limitations of wealth, whereas a person of knowledge (symbolized by Brahma) becomes arrogant and refuses to acknowledge the limitations of knowledge. Sacrificing knowledge is far more difficult than sacrificing wealth. For a scholar to admit that he does not know is similar to committing suicide. He is losing his identity.

Krishna advises the seeker to sacrifice one's knowledge and one's intellect at His feet, at the feet of the master, to experience the ultimate Truth.

A master is one who has experienced the truth. A teacher, on the other hand, is one who imparts knowledge through communication. A master is one who can simply transfer his experience of truth to you. He communes with you.

In Sanskrit, there are three beautiful words to describe this. You are born in the *bhū garbha*, the womb of the mother; this signifies your physical birth. The teacher with his love and teachings gives birth to you in the *hrid garbha*, the womb of the heart. The master gives birth to a completely new you, a transformed being in the *jñāna garbha*, the womb of knowledge. You then become re-born, *dvija*!

All you need to do is be open to the guru, the master. When you open yourself to the master, his presence simply heals you. He can elevate you to the same experience as his. This is what the *viśvarūpa darśan* is. *Viśvarūpa darśan* refers to Krishna revealing His cosmic form to Arjuna in order to show him who He really is. Krishna elevated Arjuna to the same level of consciousness in which He himself was.

Understand, masters have no vested interest for themselves; they have no *karma* to exhaust. They descend on this planet earth out of sheer compassion for humanity.

Just like a low pressure region attracts winds, so also, when a depression is created in this world, when people desire for a master to descend, the formless energy of Existence descends in a form. This energy is what is known in different forms as Krishna, Christ, Buddha etc.

Buddha says,

*Buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi*  
*Dhammam śaraṇam gacchāmi*  
*Saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi*

This means,

I surrender to Buddha, the enlightened master  
I surrender to Buddha's teachings  
I surrender to Buddha's mission

Actually, the master, his teachings and his mission are not three different entities. The master lives in all three: the body, his teachings and his mission. Masters come to dispel the ignorance of seekers, to show them the path. Only one third of the master's energy is in the physical body. The other third is in the teachings and another third is in the mission.

Nithyananda is *nitya-dhyāna-ānanda*, all in one. *Nitya*, the master in the body as Nithyananda, *dhyāna*, my teaching and message of meditation and *ānanda*, my mission of bringing forth the fountain of bliss that is lying latent in you, all the three together constitute the energy called Nithyananda. Understand that.

It is easy to do the first step that is to follow the master in his physical form because masters are so alluring and attractive by nature and they do not expect you to give them anything in return.

The next level is to follow the teachings of the master. This is slightly more difficult because other than gazing at the beautiful form of the master, now you have to actually do something. You have to not only listen to his teachings but also follow his teachings, practice them. Then, you really internalize what the master teaches but it requires some effort from you. Though it is only for your own growth, your laziness (*tamas*) causes you to not do this.

The final level is where you give your life to the mission and to spreading the master's teachings. This is the most difficult, since it requires from you the ultimate commitment for life.

People think ashram life is very easy and it is meant for retired people who can just sit and eat and have an easy life. No! Ashram life is a life of work because you are constantly implementing the master's teachings, and your whole mission is to spread his words.

When you surrender to the master, you surrender to his mission and to his teachings as well. When you surrender at the physical level, you surrender your physical self, your comforts to the master, to imbibe and spread his teachings and mission.

On the physical level, you sacrifice your comforts, like desires for luxury, wealth, food or sleep. I cannot call it sacrifice because you will feel from your very being that this is what you really want to do and this is the best use of your time and energy.

And I tell you, when you take up the responsibility of the mission, you will realize that what seemed to you as a load, as a responsibility, is actually a blissful experience. How can the mission of the master give anything other than pure bliss? The moment you surrender to the master and his mission and you stand up to take up the responsibility, you will find that the divine energy simply flows through you and you just flow effortlessly and express yourself most beautifully.

All you need to do is to be stable and available and the divine energy will make you able!

On the mental level, you surrender your intellect to serve the master and the mission. You surrender your mental faculties, mental pursuits to serve the mission according to the needs of the mission. You become like a liquid, flowing into the shapes and moulds created by the master. The master knows the best way in which you can grow. He creates the moulds for each of you according to your needs and abilities. Trust him, drop your solid ego and become fluid so you can fill in the spaces he creates for you.

At the being level, when your very being surrenders to the master, your being clearly recognizes the call of the master. You become a part of the master. You no longer carry any separate identity.

This process of transformation automatically happens when you surrender to the master, his teachings and his mission. The water is converted into formless steam. Like steam, you now explode in all directions. There are no limitations because all boundaries and limitations exist only in the mind. You now transcend the mind and express your potential. The master tirelessly and compassionately pushes you in different ways so you can also experience and be in the same state of eternal bliss as he is.

Masters are established in the truth. Out of compassion, they emote with you in a manner that you can understand. But, the only emotion that a master knows is love. All other emotions are just affectations to teach you in the language you understand. I always tell people, 'When I show compassion to you, I cheat you. When I fire you, I teach you. Either way, you grow.'

The *Vedas* also clearly declare that a master is needed. You may have access to all the books, the recorded teachings of all the great masters. But, you have only the words; where is the body language?

For example, look at yoga. Yoga as it is taught now has been reduced to just a form of physical exercise. Of course, it has physical benefits, but physical health is just one of the benefits. Yoga as taught by Patanjali is much more than a bunch of postures. It is a means to enlightenment. The way Patanjali conceived it was as a means to enlightenment. But the body language of Patanjali is no longer there for us; only his words exist. Words can only convey so much; you need a living master who is in the same consciousness, the same state as Patanjali, to convey the underlying essence of the words.

There is a beautiful verse in the Guru Gita which says, 'The guru just wipes off with the big toe of his left foot your fate which Brahma has written on your forehead.' The master can change your very destiny. He can simply take you to a new dimension, which you could not even have imagined. An astrologer may be able to predict your future, but a master can simply change your future. He is one with Existence, which is operating this whole universe. Can the energy which runs the planets and stars not have the power to handle your life?

The big problem is that it is very difficult to relate with a living master. You see, it is very easy for people to relate with dead masters. You can look at him as God. You can project all your imaginations about God on him.

When Krishna promises that He descends again and again, what He means is the Krishna energy will descend on Earth again and again. People think Krishna will come down in the same form - with the yellow clothes, the flute in hand and the two peacock feathers in the hair. Again and again, Krishna happens on planet Earth, but we are so cunning, we manage to miss Him in any form. We miss all the masters.

Another thing: It is easy to fool yourself, escaping from a living master and just worshipping a master who has left the body. It is easy to escape by just worshipping. You think nothing else is needed and you can just say whatever you want to the idol of the master, do some rituals and get away with it. You escape all the possibilities of any transformation happening. You can just say, '*Amayaṁ anahankāraṁ arāgaṁ amadaṁ tatha...*'; 'I offer my non-attachment to you', 'I offer my ego to you.'

You can say that to an idol and that idol will be there, just standing. But, if you tell me that, what will I do? I will simply catch your neck and say, 'Hey! Where is your non-attachment? Give it. Where is your ego? Surrender it!'

With the living master, he will be constantly working on you, to cut your ego and to show you your true Self, which is much higher than your small ego. But the ego is afraid to die at the master's hands, so you try to escape.

Just be open to the master's energy and you can see yourself being transformed in front of your very eyes. Just being in the master's presence can heal you. Just being open to his energy can get rid of the biggest cancer in you, your ego. Even the closest disciple or devotee may have this egoistic feeling of being close to the master. No one is immune to this illusion, this egoistic perception. Your ego sees what it wants to see, not what exists.

A small story:

A forty-year-old man was admitted to a hospital for some tests. He was just coming out of anesthesia after the tests. He opened his eyes and found his wife sitting by his side. He looked at her and said, 'You are so beautiful.'

Hearing this, his wife became very happy. She continued to sit there while he went back to sleep. After some time he woke up again and said, 'You look good.'

The wife asked, 'What happened to beautiful?'

The man replied, 'The effect of the drugs is slowly decreasing.'

Be very clear, this is how *māyā* or illusion is! Till it exists, you cannot see reality. Only when it starts lifting slowly, you can realize the Truth and your true Self. Only then do you see reality.

Then you start talking like Ashtavakra, who declares beautifully,

'I am infinite like space and the natural world is limited like a jar. To know this, is knowledge, and then there is neither renunciation, nor acceptance, nor cessation of it.

I am like the ocean and the multiplicity of objects is comparable to a wave. To know this, is knowledge and then there is neither renunciation, nor acceptance, nor cessation of it.

I am like the mother of pearl, and the imagined world is like silver. To know this, is knowledge, and then there is neither renunciation, nor acceptance, nor cessation of it.

Alternatively, I am in all beings, and all beings are in Me. To know this is knowledge, and then there is neither renunciation, nor acceptance, nor cessation of it.'

When you realize the truth that you too are one with the universe, there is nothing more to desire; there is nothing to be attached to. There is no longer any differentiation between who you are and what the universe is. *Māyā*, the illusion of that separation, disappears. That is why the master is called *guru*, one who leads you from *gu*, which is darkness, to *ru*, that is light; one who leads you from ignorance to bliss.

A master does not differentiate between who is good and who is bad. He is not bothered about what you do, whether what you do is considered meritorious by society or sinful. This whole concept of sin and virtue is societal. In some societies, it is a sin to marry more than once while in some others it is not. In some societies animal sacrifice is a sin while in some others it is a religious ritual.

Knowledge makes all the difference. Here, Krishna says beautifully, 'Even if you are the most sinful of all sinners, you will certainly completely cross the ocean of miseries with the boat of knowledge.'

At the spiritual level, the concept of sin does not exist. It is a creation of man, of man-made institutions, of religious, societal and political organizations to control others through fear. In all such institutions you will find that different sets of rules apply to those who rule and to those who are ruled. All are not judged by the same standards. A king will be immune to any sin and punishment whereas his subjects will be at the king's mercy, to be judged and punished.

The Original Sin is merely one of forgetting our true nature, our true, divine nature. Animals do not care whether they are animals or divine. They flow with nature. They eat when they are hungry, mate when nature guides them, and sleep when they are tired. In that sense, they are one with nature, one with divinity. They are not confused like us humans.

Humans eat when they don't have to, and become obese. They watch television long after they are tired and their eyes are closing. Sex is no longer for perpetuation of the species, but a form of entertainment. We have corrupted our true nature through misuse of our intellect. That is the sin we have committed.

When you have the true knowledge, the intent, the understanding of what you are doing, the very intent and knowledge will make the action divine, the act will no longer be just a ritual but a means to reach the Ultimate. Automatically, you will cross the ocean of miseries because misery itself is a result of ignorance of your true self.

When 'spirit' is added to a 'ritual', it becomes 'spi-rituality'. When wisdom is blended into the ritual, it truly becomes a prayer.

*Q: Swamiji, even if you say that ignorance of our true divinity is the original sin, it still means that we are all sinners, as we have forgotten our true nature. So, religions that label all of us as sinners are in fact correct, aren't they?*

Ignorance is not a sin; it cannot be a sin. What I am referring to as sins are your own creations. They are creations of your mind. There is nothing called sin in spirituality. There is nothing called hell. Both reside in your mind, one as an action and another as a location. That is all. You are a creature of bliss and you have no reason to suffer.

You are being controlled by this word 'sin' and you are promised redemption through another word called 'forgiveness'. Both are manipulative words that have been created solely to control you, to rule you. They are designed so that you cannot be free. How can religions and society rule you otherwise? You will also be like the mystics, the Sufi saints, the Gnostics, and the *yogis* who do not care about sins and forgiveness because they are already established in the right knowledge.

These religious leaders who control you through the fear of sin are the sinners; they are the ones whom Existence would punish, if Existence were to punish anyone. They make the rules and then make sure that the rules do not apply to them.

No master who founded the concepts on which these religions were built, ever said that man or woman is a sinner. They all uniformly talked about the divinity that resides within each individual. Time and again they said, search within and you shall find the truth. If all humans are sinners, were these masters also sinners? If they were not, how did they become exceptions?

We are all born with a divine spirit. Please understand that you are not a human being in search of a divine experience. You are indeed a divine being having a human experience. When you are born, a veil of ignorance prevents your perception of this truth. Unfortunately society and religion, instead of removing that veil, reinforces that veil, so that they can control you. Once in a while, you suddenly wake up realizing that there is something deep within that you are missing. The search begins.

If you are lucky and if you are sincere, you find a master who leads you upwards. He raises you in love. He helps you find that truth within, the realization that you are divine. You are then released of all your bondage. If you are not that fortunate, your spirit, at the point of death, longs for that release and realization. You are born again and again, with the sole meaning of realizing yourself. Once you realize the truth of your own divinity, you are no longer governed by the cycle of life and death and rebirth, which is called *saṃsāra* in Sanskrit.

Be sure that you are no sinner! You are indeed divine!





## Doubt Destroys

*4.37 Just as a blazing fire turns firewood to ashes, O Arjuna,  
So does the fire of wisdom burn to ashes all actions, all your **karma**.*

*4.38 Truly, in this world, there is nothing as pure as wisdom.*

*One who has matured to know this enjoys in himself in due course of time.*

*4.39 A person with **śraddhā** (courageous faith) achieves wisdom and has control over the senses.*

*Achieving wisdom, without delay, he attains supreme peace.*

*4.40 Those who have no wisdom and faith, who always have doubts, are destroyed.*

*There is no happiness in this world or the next.*

*4.41 O winner of riches, he who has renounced the fruits of his actions, whose doubts are destroyed, who is well established in the Self, is not bound by his actions.*

*4.42 O descendant of Bharata, therefore, stand up, be established in yoga.*

*Armed with the sword of knowledge, cut the doubt born of ignorance that exists in your heart.*

A beautiful story:

Once there was a drunkard. His wife was always fighting with him to stop drinking.

One day she showed him a newspaper and said. 'See this! Our neighbor had an accident yesterday. He was totally drunk. He got into a boat and pushed it into the river. Somehow he upset the boat, fell into the river, and got drowned. If he had not been drunk, he would not have died. This is what will happen to you also if you don't give up drinking.'

The man asked, 'He fell into the river, right?'

His wife replied, 'Yes.'

The man asked, 'He did not die till he fell in the water, right?'

His wife replied, 'That's true.'

The man then declared, 'Then it was the water that killed him, not the drink!'

When you are led by your sensory inputs, you easily come to the wrong conclusions. You interpret based on your inclinations and not on the truth. The filter of your ego interprets whatever you perceive through your senses. Your ego decides as to how you understand what you see, hear, touch, taste or smell, and thereafter how you act.

There is only so much you can see through the lens of your ego. Whatever you see will be tainted because you are seeing it through your mind, through your biased perceptions based on past memories. To see the truth, you need to really 'see' beyond your ego, mind and senses. When you do that, you can see the infinite dimensions of the ultimate.

The words that you gather cannot give you the ultimate knowledge. When you just gather words without digesting the meaning, either indigestion sets in or you start vomiting out those words on others.

A small story:

Once, a blind man went to a doctor to see if he had any hope of getting back his eyesight. The doctor checked him and said, 'Yes, I can do an operation and you can get back your eyesight. Then, you can drop your stick and start walking.'

The man replied, 'Doctor, I understand I will get back my eyesight, but how can I walk without the stick?'

The blind man could not understand that he can walk without a stick! He does not even know what it means to be able to see. The doctor has to do the operation to give him back his eyesight, then automatically he will drop the stick.

When I tell people to drop their mind, they look at me as if I am a mad man. They ask me, 'How can we drop the mind? It is easy for you, you have renounced everything, you have no wife, no responsibilities, and on top of it you are enlightened. So, you can talk. How can we, living in this ocean of bondage, the *samsāra sāgara*, be in no-mind and yet survive?'

It is only when you drop the mind, it is only when you stop connecting your thoughts to form a shaft, that you really start 'seeing'. Your ego stops interfering with the truth of what you see. It stops filtering and adding tones to what your senses experience. Your baggage of value systems and beliefs, your embedded memories, your *samskāras*, dissolve, and the new 'you' is born. You are reborn.

All your actions then arise out of intuition, from the superconscious state, the state of truth, where no mind can exist.

In the next verse, Krishna uses the word '*śraddhā*' again. Actually, *śraddhā* cannot be translated as faith. *Śraddhā* does not mean faith. It means faith plus the courage to execute the idea; the courage to experiment with the idea is *śraddhā*. Courage to experiment with the idea is what is referred to as *śraddhā*.

When you have the knowledge and at the same time, you have the courage to follow the teachings, then you can achieve the ultimate.

Many people do not have the courage to follow their research through. When Galileo declared that it is the earth that goes around the sun, while the Christian belief at that time was that everything revolves around the earth, he was persecuted. In his writings, he actually has a footnote, 'We can deny this, but since the earth and sun are not Christians, they will continue to move the way they do, irrespective of Christian beliefs!'

If you see the eastern sages, they did so much inner world research. Millions of them have done full-time research for thousands of years using their bodies and minds as laboratories. This knowledge of the inner world is the result of their courageous experiments and studies. They were true inner scientists who had not only the curiosity and the perseverance to know, but also the courage to follow their findings.

Look at Patanjali: He boldly declares that all that he says in the Yoga Sutras is completely open to experimentation and verification. He says, 'You are free to try this, and if you find anything more to be added or edited, you are free to do so.' He has experimented and presented his research report. He invites you to try out these in your life and if you learn something more from that, his work is open to editing. That is the beauty of our system; it is a living system open to being updated.

Our masters have declared that it is the truth that matters, so they present their research reports based on what they have learnt from experience. If by practicing the truth one loses something, it is better to lose it. Whatever cannot stand the test of truth, let it get washed away. It is better for our being that it gets lost as early as possible.

Of all religious and spiritual doctrines, it is only the scriptures of the *Sanātana dharma*, the eternal path of righteousness, as the Hindu philosophy is called, that allow themselves to be updated. The *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*, which we believe are the voices of Nature, are not rules and regulations. They are truths to be understood and followed only in awareness. There are no punishments if one does not follow them, nor is one condemned as a sinner if one doesn't follow them.

The rules and regulations, which followed in later days, came clearly with the injunction that they can be modified if needed. Nothing was sacred just because it was uttered. All that we follow blindly today as traditions, came through societal interpretation. It is for us to sift through these truths with conscious awareness.

Once tested, proven and accepted, we need to have the courage to practice these truths. Mere knowledge is insufficient. That is what *śraddhā* is about. With *śraddhā*, faith combined with courage, you make the effort to conquer your senses, and direct your mind towards the truth, instead of your mind and senses leading you wherever they wish to.

Many people in this world are blessed by Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth), Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge) but very few people are blessed by Kali (the goddess of courage). When Lakshmi and Saraswati join with Kali, your liberation is assured!

In the next few beautiful verses, Krishna says that there is no happiness for those who always have doubts and who have no knowledge and faith. He uses the word 'always'. He does not say that from the beginning itself you should not have any doubts. Having doubts is natural; as long as you have the mind, doubts will be there. But you can go beyond it.

In the Shiva Sutra, Devi asks, 'O Shiva, what is your reality? What is this wonder-filled universe? What constitutes the seed? Who centers the universal wheel? What is this life beyond form pervading form? How may we enter it fully, beyond space and time, names and descriptions? Let my doubts be cleared.'

Beautifully she expresses her whole state of mind through these few words. The last words are, 'Let my doubts be cleared.' She never says, 'Please answer my questions.' If she had made that mistake by asking, 'Answer my question', she would have produced one more Gita through Shiva.

See, in the Gita, Arjuna is not ready to surrender to Krishna completely. That is why in the beginning Krishna has to give him all the intellectual answers. Arjuna thinks he can solve his confusion through these answers; he doesn't know that these are much deeper doubts that need to be cleared through the experience of the truth. That is why Krishna has to give more than 700 verses to first convince Arjuna that he does not know. When Arjuna finally gives up saying 'I don't know' then Krishna reveals Himself! He reveals the truth and makes Arjuna experience it because that is the only way he will realize the truth.

If you say, 'Let my questions be answered', you want only intellectual answers. But Devi says, 'Let my doubts be cleared, whether you give words or energy or techniques, I am not bothered, but let me be free from doubts.'

When questions become a quest, you start speaking in this language. When the urge becomes urgent, you start speaking in this language.

Devi starts with the beautiful words, 'Let my doubts be cleared.' This shows the deep surrender of Devi. A deep passive waiting without knowing what is going to happen is passive surrender. That is what I call total surrender.

Actually, the moment you decide 'I will wait forever', things will simply start happening for you! As long as you are in a hurry and agitated, you stop things from happening in you. It is like trying your best to make the lotus bloom. What will you do? You open out the petals by hand. Will it be a flower? It will never be a lotus flower. A lotus can be called a lotus flower only when it blossoms by itself. Give it a little space and time.

The moment you decide to wait, things will simply start happening, and you don't have to wait anymore. You have to wait till you decide to wait! The moment you decide to wait, you don't have to wait anymore.

When you ask 'why', you cannot reach the truth, because you are not even ready to see 'what' and you ask the 'why' before that. Just allow the master to do

the operation and give you back your true Self, and automatically you will drop what you are not.

Krishna refers here to the stages in the master-disciple relationship. There are many levels. The first level is purely intellectual, doubt-based. 'Doubt-based' refers to the negative doubts, which are purely intellectual. It is like you are telling yourself on seeing the master, 'Eh! What is he going to sit and do? Let us see. How is he able to mobilize such a big crowd at such a young age? He seems to be hardly thirty. He doesn't seem to be trained in marketing and doesn't seem to be very intelligent either! How is he mobilizing such a big crowd around him? What is going on here?'

The next step is intelligence; from intellect to intelligence. You tell yourself, 'Why not attend this program and see what he is really doing?' By this time, it has changed from, 'What is he doing!' to 'Oh, I think He means something. But I neither believe nor disbelieve Him. Ok, let us check it out.' The intellect is becoming intelligence. You are giving a little space for the master.

Then, next, if you continue to start looking in, first from intellect to intelligence, then from intelligence to intelligence combined with emotion, like 60% intelligence, 40% emotion, that is the time you will feel like a friend towards the master.

After that, it becomes 60% emotion and 40% intelligence. That is the time you will feel like the master is like an elder, like a father or mother or lord or teacher. You feel respectful towards him. And then, the relationship becomes pure emotion. You will feel a deep connection like a mother and son.

Then, after that, it is neither emotion nor intellect nor intelligence. It is a being-level relationship. It is the deep connection of a beloved, the *madhura bhāva*.

And suddenly, you will see, he is not even the beloved, he is beyond the beloved. You start experiencing the *mahā bhāva*, what I call the guru-disciple experience, experiencing yourself as the master. That is what I call '*Tat tvam asī*'. '*Tat tvam asī*' means 'That art thou'. It means you *are* the master.

First it is just intellect, where you have doubts. But you have to go beyond that. If you are stuck in this level of negative doubts, naturally you will suffer with the doubts and misery. The next level is intelligence, then 60% intelligence and 40% emotion, then 60% emotion and 40% intelligence, then pure emotion, then 60% emotional and 40% being level, then pure being level and then all these and something more.

When you go beyond doubts and faith, into the realization of the formless energy that is you, then you find yourself.

I am presenting this secret science as a hypothesis. Now you are welcome to analyze this with your questions.

**Q. Swamiji, how to find out whether somebody is enlightened or not?**

Arjuna asks the same question. I think in the second chapter, Krishna answers this same question. Let me give you the verse.

Arjuna asks:

*sthitaprajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhisthasya keśava ।  
sthitadhīḥ kim prabhāṣeta kim āsīta vrajeta kim ॥ 2.54*

Arjuna asks, 'Krishna, what are the signs of him whose consciousness is thus merged in transcendence? How does he speak and what is his language? How does he sit and how does he walk?'

This is a question from the second chapter. Of course, in the second chapter, Arjuna is not ready to even relate with Krishna. That is why Krishna is explaining about enlightenment.

Immediately Arjuna asks how to find out whether somebody is enlightened or not; how an enlightened man would walk and sit. Actually he is addressing this question to find out whether Krishna is enlightened or not!

For example, when Krishna says that these are the qualities of enlightenment and explains about it, immediately, Arjuna asks, 'How does an enlightened man behave, tell me'. What does this mean? He doubts Krishna, Krishna's authority! He wants some scale with which he can measure Krishna.

But one important thing: Even though, out of compassion, Krishna tries here to answer logically, you cannot logically measure enlightenment. That is the ultimate truth. Just out of compassion, Krishna tries to give some idea. Actually, Krishna is just postponing the question, He does not answer.

There are two or three methods to deal with questions. A person came to me and asked me, 'Swamiji, please tell me how to realize God. How to achieve God? Teach me something about God, something about *ātman* and *brahman*.'

I started talking to him, 'Yes, how are you? Where are you from? What are you doing? What is your wife doing? How is your family?' I started a polite conversation. He too started talking. The conversation went on and on. After that he was with me for three hours but he didn't raise his original question even once!

He forgot the very question. He did not even remember the question that he had asked. He did not even come to the subject. Then understand how important this question was for his life!

He asked just because he had to ask something. When you see the master, you feel you have to show that you have some spiritual interest. In some way you have to relate with him. And you have to show that you also know a few words.

One man came and told me, '*Swamiji*, tell me the *mantra* (chant) to invoke the eighteen-handed goddess Kali.' He was asking me to give him the chant to worship the eighteen-handed goddess Kali. He said, 'She should listen to what I say. Give me the *mantra* for it.'

I told him, 'First learn the chant to make your two-handed wife listen to your words! First learn how to handle two-handed women! Then you can go about learning how to work with eighteen-handed women!' You don't know the basic science of life, how to live with your wife! You want to learn big words. We always waste our life with big words, with fancy terminology.

So this guy who wanted to know about God forgot the question itself! After that he spent two or three hours with me, but he did not even remember the question. He asked the question just because he had to speak something. It was not his quest. Questions are answered in one way; quest is addressed in another way.

Please be very clear, questions are answered in one way, quest is addressed in another way. A young man once asked me, '*Swamiji*, have you seen God?' It seems he had read a lot about Sri Ramakrishna and *Vedanta* literature. And I could see that he was wearing a Vivekananda pendant around his neck.

He asked, 'Have you seen God?' I asked him, 'Have you read Ramakrishna and Vivekananda's life?' He said, 'Yes! I am asking you like how Vivekananda asked Ramakrishna. In the same way I am asking you. Have you seen God?'

I just caught hold of his shirt, so that he would not run away. Then I said, 'Ramakrishna said that he had seen God. And Vivekananda simply followed Ramakrishna. Throughout his life he was with Ramakrishna. Now I tell you, not



only have I seen God, I will show you, come! Once I show you, you have to be committed for your whole life.'

The fellow ran away! He just disappeared. He escaped and ran away.

Don't ask the question if you cannot take up the responsibility. Don't ask just because you read about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda's lives. Vivekananda asked Ramakrishna, true. But he had the courage, he had the guts to follow Ramakrishna after that. When Ramakrishna said, 'Yes, I have seen God,' Vivekananda followed. I told him, 'Not only have I seen Him, I can also show you, come.' The fellow just escaped!

We always waste our lives with empty words. Questions will be addressed in one way, while quest will be addressed in a different way. Here, Arjuna is asking a question. It is not a quest.

How to find out whether it is a question or a quest? If it is a quest, you will have only one word, you will put one question and stop. You will then wait for the answer.

If it is just an intellectual question, you will continuously speak out at least ten words. Here he is asking ten questions: How does he speak? What is his language? How does he sit and how does he walk? That means he is not even interested in the answer!

If you are interested in the answer, you will stop with the first question. You will wait for the answer. Then you will put the next question. But here he goes on posing questions, purely intellectual. Arjuna is in the process. He is in the process. Then Krishna starts.

Of course, please be very clear, Krishna is not answering. He is just postponing the question. He knows that answering this question is in no way going to help. So He answers in such a way that Arjuna would neither feel that he did not receive the answer, nor would he be able to come to a conclusion with the answer!

Here He is giving an answer:

*prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha manogatān ।  
ātmanyevā 'tmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthitaprajñas tado 'cyate ॥ 2.55*

He says, 'Partha, when a man controls all types of desires and selfish deeds that arise from the mind and when he remains satisfied with himself and his consciousness, in his eternal bliss, then he is said to have a stable mind and life.'

Alright, how many of you can find out with this scale, whether somebody is enlightened or not? Tell me. Here He has given the answer. Can any of us use this answer? After the answer, you will have more problems than before the answer!

Actually, sometimes, by giving an answer, you will create more questions than what existed before the question was posed! Originally, if Arjuna had ten questions, after this answer, he would have had twenty questions! Because the answer says, 'Who is completely established in his own consciousness, who is satisfied in his own consciousness, he is said to have a stable mind and life.'

And He says, 'He is said to have'. He is not giving from his experience. He could have said, 'He is'. But He is not saying that. 'He is believed, or said to have a stable mind and life'. He is just trying to escape, putting the blame on the tradition. He is not directly coming in the front. He is not confronting the question directly. He is just passing it on. He is just pushing it away because Arjuna is not yet ready for the ultimate truth.

Whenever close disciples asked Ramakrishna for some boon, he would say, 'Don't worry, I'll take care.' Whenever he wanted to avoid the question or boon for the present, he would say, 'Go to Kali and pray!' He would not put himself in the front. He would just avoid the issue. The same thing Krishna is doing here. He is saying, 'It is believed.'

Next verse:

*duḥkheṣvanudvignamanāḥ sukheṣu vigatasprṇaḥ |  
vīta rāga bhaya krodhaḥ sthitadhīr munir ucyate || 2.56*

The translation goes: One whose mind remains free from emotional agitation even in miseries, who does not search for pleasure, and who is free from attachments, fear and anger, is called an enlightened man - who is in eternal bliss, eternal consciousness.

If your inner space is not filled with too much of emotional attachments, it can freely flow in life. It can freely flow in life.

Many people ask me, 'Swamiji, how are you continuously able to quote from the scriptures? From where are you able to get so much information? How are you able to speak so many things?' I tell them, 'It's a very simple secret.' So many people ask, 'How are you able to have such a sharp memory? Give us a technique to have sharp memory.'

This is the ultimate technique for a sharp memory. How to have a sharp memory? Just drop the emotional attachments.

It is just like how a computer works. If your hard disc is filled with high-resolution photographs, what will happen? It will crash! If it is filled with only word documents, it can handle any amount of memory. Your emotional attachment makes word documents into high-resolution photographs. Word documents are transformed into high-resolution photographs, high-resolution pictures, by your emotional attachment to them.

When you are emotionally attached to it, again and again you remember only that. That portion takes away the majority of your inner space. Your whole inner space is swallowed, taken away, by that one particular picture.

If at all you can do surgery in your inner space and peer inside, you will see that most of your inner space is filled with four or five big-sized photographs. Your wife or family or kids; only those four or five pictures will be there in high resolution. Ninety percent of your hard disc is filled with these four or five high-resolution pictures. That is why you don't have memory space left for any other work. Your whole memory space is already occupied. No memory space is left.

But if at all you can bring it down, if at all you can reduce the emotional attachment to these few high-resolution pictures, you will be able to handle more word documents, and therefore have more memory.

That is the secret Krishna is giving here. Whose inner space is completely free, whose hard disc is completely clean, he who can process any information at any time, whose inner space is open, free and sharp, is called *sthitaprajña*. He is called the person who is in eternal consciousness.

These are all the answers Krishna gives Arjuna. But I tell you, with this scale, you will never be able to find out who is enlightened and who is unenlightened; by using this scale intellectually it is simply impossible.

If you want an honest answer I can tell you one thing: You can never find it out logically. If somebody is enlightened, when you see him, something will simply happen inside your heart. Beyond your intellect, your whole heart will fall in tune with him. You will not be able to forget him.

You will be pulled. Your whole being will be attracted to him. He will automatically fill your whole being. You will not know what is happening to you. You yourself will not be able to understand or analyze logically.

You will be just waiting, thinking, ‘When can I see him next? When can I see him next?’ Your heart will simply fall in love. I can say, with masters, you rise in love; with ordinary people, you fall in love! Something will happen in your space. Beyond your control, beyond your logic, your heart will know, he is enlightened. You will not be able to say ‘no’ to him.

Be very clear, if that happens, that person is going to help you. That person is going to show you what life is. That person is your master. If that doesn’t happen, don’t bother, continue your search. You will meet the right person. Continue your search, you will meet the right person.

Don’t bother about who is enlightened or who is not enlightened. Intellectually you cannot find out. If somebody is going to help you, your heart will simply fall in tune with him. If it falls in tune with him, even if he is not enlightened, he will help you. Even if he is not enlightened, you will be helped by him.

If your heart has not fallen in tune, even if he is enlightened, he is not for you. Forget about him. So you don’t have to use your head at all. Just relax. Your heart knows how to show you the right path, how to guide you onto the right path. Your heart is the judge which will guide you automatically in the right time, in the right moment, towards the right person.

So, let the divine *Parabrahma* Krishna guide us all to the right energy, to the right attitude and the right experience. Let Him shower eternal bliss. Let Him make us experience and radiate eternal bliss, *nityānanda*. Thank you.

*Thus ends the fourth chapter named Jñānakarmasannyāsa Yogaḥ of the Upaniṣad of Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of yoga dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.*

# BhagavadGita

## Live All Your Dimensions

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### CHAPTER 5

Seeking more and more does not lead to happiness.  
It leads to only depression.  
Then what leads to happiness?



- ◆ Is going into an ashram or being a *sanyāsi* a form of running away? Many people seem to be moving into ashrams only to get away from what they seem to see as the suffering they face in the material world. Will they not face a different kind of suffering in the ashram or the forest too?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, I am confused by the word bliss. All I understand is that it is the same as happiness or joy. But you say it is not. Please explain.
- ◆ *Swamiji*, I understand the truth of what Krishna says. Giving up sensual pleasures and treating everything as the same, is the answer. But how can I practice this understanding? As a normal human being, I am controlled by my senses. Please guide me.
- ◆ *Swamiji*, of all the qualities that humans possess and express, what would be the greatest virtue, the one that would be close to divinity?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, how can we see everything equally, without differentiation? We ourselves are not created equally; we are all different and diverse. How then is it possible to see every one else the same way as Krishna suggests?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, how can one control the pressures of the senses? I have the intention but do not have the capability. I need help.
- ◆ *Swamiji*, how do we know whether a master is enlightened or not?



## Live All Your Dimensions

If we look closely at our lifestyle, what we accept as normal is actually chaotic and crazy. But we have been conditioned with it since childhood so we are not even aware of this.

From an early age we are taught certain beliefs and habits that cut deep grooves in our mind. The rest of our lives we follow these furrows and tracks of thinking. In Indian villages, even today, they grind oil seeds in a traditional expeller, powered by bullocks. These bullocks are tied in such a way that they walk in circles to crush the seeds inside the expeller. If we analyze the way we live, we are very much like these bullocks! We get caught in a rut and we go around driven by our senses and memories. Just as the bullocks chew the cud as they walk around, we too chew the cud of our memories and sensual perceptions as we unconsciously follow the same routine day after day, year after year.

Even when we think we are breaking the routine and doing things creatively and rationally, it is just an illusion of our mind. We are still driven by our unconscious mind and the memories stored in the unconscious mind. Any scientist will tell us that nearly ninety percent of our mind exists in the 'unconscious' zone, where all our deep memories are stored. This is the hard disk of our mind. What we think of as our conscious and rational mind is just a flash memory drive that is transient.

These engraved memories stored in the deep unconscious mind make decisions on our behalf, even though we are completely unaware of it. What we may think of as an intuitive decision is actually an instinctive decision that arises from our unconscious.

Most people do not understand the difference between intuition and instinct. Instinct is the unconscious. It is what drives animals. It is the deeply grooved habit patterns that are encoded in the genes and DNA.

Since the unconscious brain acts much faster than the conscious brain, the instinctive action of the unconscious is of crucial value to our survival.

Intuition on the other hand is a superconscious state of the mind. It is a state of mind that is developed through meditation. It is where we reach when we move inwards through our senses. It is a state of living and being in the present moment.

Intuition transcends time and space. Intuition allows us to explode in all directions while instinct restricts us to the furrowed path of our conditioned, unconscious memories.

Time and again people tell me, '*Swamiji*, it is easy for you to do what you do. You have no family ties. You have renounced wealth. We are bonded to relationships and material possessions. How can we become spiritual?'

Let me tell you clearly that this is your instinct speaking. You are caught in the conditioning of your unconscious mind, believing that you can do only one thing at a time. You have sold yourself into the bondage of believing you are uni-dimensional.

By nature we are multi-dimensional. By nature we are intuitive. By nature we are enlightened. All that we lack is the awareness of this potential of ours.

In the verses that follow and in the rest of the Gita, the master tells us how to break away from our bondages and become multi-dimensional. He teaches us how to reach our true state. This is what the word *samādhi* means... to go back to our true nature.

Time and again Jesus Christ uses the word 'repent' as in 'repent or you shall perish'. This word is mistakenly taken to mean that He wants us to regret or feel guilty. This is not at all what it means. This word 'repent', native Aramaic, is used by Jesus to instruct us to 'go back to the original state'! It had exactly the same meaning as the word '*samādhi*'.

Throughout the Gita, Krishna talks about yoga. Each chapter refers to one type of yoga or another. Yoga is the same as *samādhi*. Yoga means 'uniting'. It means uniting with our true nature.

When we unite with our true Self, we become multi-dimensional. We can be material and spiritual. There are no constraints and no limitations. We are free. We had wealthy kings like Janaka, who were realized souls. Material wealth does not limit anyone from being spiritual. It is only the attachment to wealth through greed, and the fear of losing the wealth that stops one from being free.



*5.1 Arjuna said:*

*Oh Krishna, you asked me to renounce work first and then you ask me to work with devotion.*

*Will you now please tell me, one way or the other, which of the two will work for me?*

*5.2 Krishna says: The renunciation of work and work in devotion are both good for liberation.*

*But of the two, work in devotional service is better than renunciation of work.*

*5.3 He who neither hates nor desires the fruits of his activities has renounced.*

*Such a person, free from all dualities, easily overcomes material bondage and is completely liberated, Oh Arjuna!*

*5.4 Only the ignorant speaks of the path of action to be different from the path of renunciation.*

*Those who are actually learned say that both action and renunciation lead to the same truth.*

In all the previous four chapters, Krishna talks with such clarity and authority that it would dissolve the doubts of anybody listening to Him. Krishna has been explaining again and again so clearly in every verse, and yet Arjuna has come back to the same point.

If you look at it, it will seem like Arjuna was playing a game. A person who was a king could never have been so ignorant. Either both of them were playing a game so that the Gita could be delivered to the world or Arjuna was really desperate with no other way to save himself. There is no other book that is so clear, so direct. There is no other master who is so straight in giving the instructions.

After all the explanation given by Krishna previously, Arjuna continues to ask, 'Oh Krishna, first of all, you asked me to renounce work and then again you recommend work with devotion. Now, will you kindly tell me clearly, which of the two is more beneficial?'

We will never get an answer if we start thinking about which would be more beneficial. Please be very clear: We can never solve a problem if we start thinking in terms of benefits.

First of all, 'benefit' is a very subjective term because the scale with which this is measured can vary from person to person. Before we evaluate the benefits of something, we should be clear about the scale we want to use to measure the benefits. What is beneficial for one person may be completely useless for another. The scale that we use for measuring success is a very important thing.

Before jumping to a conclusion and branding ourselves as 'successful' or 'unsuccessful', we need to know the scale with which we are going to measure our life. Unless we know the scale, it does not make sense to conclude anything. Even jumping to a conclusion should be done with clear intelligence. Jumping to a conclusion without intelligence is like falling out of an airplane without a parachute! We just won't know where we will land.

Before measuring life in terms of success or failure, one should know how this success is to be measured in the first place. If we are going to measure our life with a scale of dollars, then we have to work only for dollars. So, from morning to evening, we would work only for that goal. At the end of the day, we will know, 'Yes, this is the scale with which I am going to measure my life.' Based on this, we can conclude whether we are succeeding or failing in our life.

But you see, by the time we reach evening, the very scale changes! So what happens? We start our life using a certain scale and after a few years we measure again using a totally different scale. The very yardstick used for measuring our success or failure will have changed.

I can say one thing: It is fortunate that the scale changes. The scale changes with maturity. If we learn our lessons from Existence, if we grow with every mistake in life, then the scale with which we measure success in life should also change.

If it does not change, please be very clear, we will start the next life from ground zero. We would start our life again from the same point where we last left it. It is an endless game unless we learn lessons and move on. We will play the same game again and again and again. If the scale with which we measure our success changes in the right way, it shows we are becoming mature.

If the scale stays in the same level of dollars and wealth, not only will we not be able to measure our life clearly but we can also expect unhappiness. This is because there is no end to accumulating money or any material wealth. First of all,

we set high standards for ourselves in terms of luxuries and material comforts. Even if we achieve these, we are not successful in our own eyes because we would have extended our target by comparing with others. Out of greed we keep saying, 'What next, what next'. There is no end to this.

At the end of our lives, we feel we have not done enough. What happens next? We again start our whole game of a fresh birth and life from day one, from square one, with the same limited maturity.

One important thing: If only money is our scale, if only worldly comfort is our scale, be very clear, again and again we will feel we could have done a little more. We would always feel that we did not do enough and that we missed out in life. There is no absolute scale that defines success especially in monetary terms. For any amount of money that we have, we would be happier with a dollar more.

Let me tell you a small story:

A king's barber used to live a very happy life. Every morning he would go to the palace to shave the king's face. The king would give him ten gold coins and the barber would return home. He used to live his life happily with the ten gold coins given to him everyday after shaving the king's face. His life was really beautiful and blissful. There was nothing to bother about. There was nothing about which he was worried. He was happy.

One day when he was coming back from the king's palace, suddenly, he heard a booming voice, 'Dear son, do you want forty gold coins?'

The barber said, 'Forty gold coins? What am I going to do with them? I have no use for it. My expense is ten gold coins and that is enough. I don't need anything more.'

The booming voice said, 'I will give you twenty-four hours to think. You can go home, think about it, come back tomorrow and tell me. If you decide 'yes', I shall give you a magical jar full of gold coins.'

This poor barber should have at least kept quiet about this. He went and opened his mouth to his wife!

She started to scream, 'You fool! Don't you have any sense? You should have brought that jar. She raved and ranted, 'You never did this for me, you never did that for me.' Throughout my life, I am wearing the same *sarees* (traditional attire of Indian women). You have never gifted me any jewelry. You have

never indulged me. You have never taken me on a vacation. What have I enjoyed after marrying you?’

I tell you, marriage is a three-ring circus: One is the engagement ring, next is the wedding ring and the third is suffice-ring!

When she started shouting at him, the barber said, ‘Alright, fine. Don’t worry. The booming voice has given me time till tomorrow morning. I have time to decide. Tomorrow morning, I will talk to him and get the jar.’

The next day morning, he told the voice, ‘Please give me that jar.’ Immediately, a *yakṣa* (an astral being) appeared before him and said, ‘Have this jar. This jar has got 990 gold coins, just 10 gold coins less than 1000.’

The guy brought the gold jar back to the house. He was very happy that he could spend it for at least 99 days if he spent ten coins per day. But the moment his wife got the jar, she said, ‘What is this? The jar is not overflowing. There is something missing.’ He said, ‘I don’t know. This is the way I got the jar. The *yakṣa* told me that it is a little less.’

She started worrying, ‘Had it been full, how nice it would have been! It would have been so good.’ The next day, when the barber came back, she hurriedly grabbed all the ten gold coins that he had got from the king that day and put them in the jar. She wanted the jar to overflow. But to her surprise, again the level in the jar was below the brim. It was not full.

The barber’s wife now started becoming restless. She waited anxiously for the next day’s wages to fill the jar. The next evening, again, she took the money from the barber and put them into the jar. Again, it was a little short from being full. It was almost full but it was not completely full. This went on continuously for a week. She stopped giving food to the barber and cut all expenses. She took away all the gold coins from him, put it in the jar and desperately waited to see the jar overflow.

In one week’s time the barber had become tired and dull. It showed on his face that he was drained out. The king started enquiring, ‘What happened? You used to look so fresh. What happened to you? For the last one week I have been observing that you are tired. You have started thinking about something. You have started worrying. What happened to you? Did you accept the *yakṣa*’s jar?’

The barber was shocked at hearing this. He said, 'Oh king, how do you know?'

The king said, 'Whoever is suffering in this country, whoever is unhappy in this country, all of them have one thing in common. They accepted the *yakṣa's* jar at some point in time.

The king said, 'When you go back home, get rid of the *yakṣa's* jar if you wish to be happy again.'

The man did so and lived happily again from that day on.

What the king said applies to all of us. Go back home and see if you have *yakṣa's* jar or not, and if you do, get rid of it. If you are worrying, if you are suffering, there is every chance that in your house you have the *yakṣa's* jar. The *yakṣa's* jar never gets filled.

Of course, when I say *yakṣa's* jar, it may not literally be there in your house. But it will surely be there in your head. Be very clear: Sometimes *yakṣa* hands over the jar in the form of a bank balance! Don't think it will be only in the form of a jar. It may be in your mind. *Yakṣa's* jar is made out of the Brahma *kapāla*, meaning one of Lord Brahma's head that Lord Shiva holds in his hand, which simply swallows anything that is put into it and asks for more. The *yakṣa's* jar makes us feel that we are not enough, that we are not complete, that we are not full. Our head makes us feel continuously that we are not enough unto ourselves and we are not complete.

However much we may have, whatever we may get, in ten days we will feel it is not sufficient. In ten days our mind will take everything for granted. *Yakṣa* refers to a person who has got wealth but neither does he enjoy it nor does he share it with the world. In India, there are many agricultural fields where they keep two or three dogs. The dogs will neither eat the grains nor will they allow other animals to come and eat. In the same way, if we have wealth and neither enjoy nor share it with others, we are called a *yakṣa*.

When accumulation of wealth is done greedily, there is never an end, like the *yakṣa's* jar, because there is always scope for more. And secondly, when one is so preoccupied about accumulating, enjoyment never happens. The greed of wanting more and more and the fear that the saved balance will deplete, hinders true enjoyment of the wealth. Why are we accumulating possessions if we do not stop and enjoy them?

I always tell people, 'Either you do *dāna* (charity) or you achieve *mahādāna* (the final and grand sacrifice or death). If you do *dāna* you share a little along with

enjoying yourself. You will enjoy and others also will enjoy. If you don't do some *dāna*, you will achieve *mahādāna*, which means you will leave everything and go away once and for all when you die.

Ramana Maharishi says beautifully, 'Before achieving it, even a mustard seed will look like a mountain.' It will seem that without that, your life will not move. It will seem as if that is the basic and most important thing for your life. 'Once you achieve it, even a mountain will look like a mustard seed.'

The mind is such, that before achieving, even a trivial thing seems so important and huge in our lives like the mustard seed that initially looks like a mountain. Suddenly, once it is achieved, even a mountain will look like a mustard seed. This is because something else looks like a mountain now. We get caught in the trap of achieving, and lose the ability to relax and enjoy what we have achieved.

Here, Arjuna asks:

'Now, will you please tell me surely, which of the two: *Karma*, action or *sanyās*, renunciation is more beneficial?'

All of us, again and again continue to ask this question to ourselves. Mind is dilemma! Please be very clear, our mind itself is nothing but dilemma. Our mind will be alive as long as we are caught between any two extremes. The moment we come to any single conclusion we will be liberated. We will be ignorant as long as we are moving from one extreme to the other.

Don't say, 'Ignorance is bliss.' If ignorance is bliss why are so many people suffering on this planet earth? Ignorance is not bliss. Innocence is bliss. That is the difference. Innocence means we will not carry a scale with which we are continuously measuring our life.

Ignorance means we will have a scale but we will not be able to fulfill our life according to our scale. If we neither have a scale nor have a goal, then there is no problem. But if we have enough intellect to have a scale but we are not able to fulfill it, then that is what I call ignorance.

The first thing we need to understand is that we have made our mind itself as a disease. The first and last disease is dilemma, the play of the mind. Dilemma is the disease with which man starts his life and ends his life too. I can't even say 'ends'. He will even be in a dilemma about whether or not to end it! But death comes and his life is just taken away from him. It is just taken away.

Here, Arjuna is in a dilemma as to which of the two is more beneficial for him. If we look into the entire life as a utility, as some means to a benefit, please be very clear, we are creating our own hell. If we reduce life to this, we will be in hell.

Life has no separate benefit. Life *itself* is a benefit. There are people, especially in the West, who have achieved all that they wanted in life. They have realized their own dreams, the dreams borrowed from others and the dreams imposed on them. But they feel a deep void in them. This is what I mean by the term 'depression of success'.

They start wondering about what it was that they ran after. When they were running, their desires drove them. They were a part of the rat race. One desire would have led to a bigger one. Once they achieve all that they thought would give them happiness, they suddenly find that they have no drive to acquire more and they feel dissatisfied also. Eventually, they are confused about themselves. They do not know what more to desire. They feel something is lacking and are unable to comprehend what it could possibly be.

This is because they ran without awareness, without stopping to give an appointment to themselves, without any self-inquiry. They ran because everyone around was running. They never stopped for a minute to question why or what they really wanted in the first place. So when they stop running or when suddenly they can't run anymore, they fall back into themselves and suddenly find that they are out of sync or dis-eased with their own being. This is what becomes depression or disease.

So if you constantly look for some benefit from life, if you don't achieve, you will feel life is a failure and if you achieve, you are bound to face the depression of success. Either way it is trouble.

Life itself is a benefit. If we constantly try to see which of two things is *more* beneficial, it means we have a pure business mind. With life we cannot do business. Our whole life cannot be managed as a business. At some point we need to relax from the business mind.

I always tell people, 'For at least half an hour per day, do something which will not get dollars for you - some painting, some writing, some poetry, something.'

When you start painting, don't start thinking of a big gallery with your paintings! Don't start thinking, 'I will make all these paintings and put up a gallery in New York and make money.' For at least 30 minutes, do some painting or

creative work without bothering about where to have a gallery or how to show off your art work to people.

Even before starting to paint, we will think, 'My friend will come home. I will show this to him and explain how I started these paintings and how I developed this concept.' You will decide how to bore your friend with your plans.

Now think a little about my plight. I visit so many houses in a year. In some of the houses, when I go, they start giving me a commentary on the whole house. They start from the entrance and say, '*Swamiji*, this photo is from this temple from this city and I bought it in 1962...' People just love talking about such things.

Similarly, when you start writing a few poems, don't start thinking of a Pulitzer Prize. Don't start thinking, 'I will publish this. It will be recognized like the famous Gitanjali. I will then win the Nobel Prize.' No! Without thinking about any result or benefit, just do something. Don't start planning, 'In the next party, I think I should read out this poem aloud.' Do something just for the sake of doing it, not for any purpose. You will see that during that half hour, you will fall into your very being!

Or instead of painting or writing poems, go to some place of worship, clean and wipe the place. Don't think, 'I will be the leader of a volunteer batch for this place.' The moment you take a broomstick in your hand, start swabbing, start cleaning the place without any big expectations in return. Engage yourself in any form of selfless activity at a place of public service. Serve food for people. But do it without thinking of how to make a big deal out of it or how to derive some benefit from it.

Even doing volunteering is an ego boost for many of us. Many of us like to volunteer mainly so that we can go and tell others about it and get applauded for it. So now at least for 30 minutes do something that will not give any benefit to you or what you think of as some benefit to you.

No money or name and fame should come to you from that half an hour. If you can just use 30 minutes from your life for this, you will start tasting the real essence of life. As long as you are sitting in the head, continuously calculating, you will only be having a bargain with your life, 'What is more beneficial? What am I going to achieve by this? What am I going to achieve by that?'

I tell you: You will see a different dimension of your being if you follow this technique. I promise that these 30 minutes will lead you to Krishna consciousness. These 30 minutes will be the only useful time in your life.



There are many people who come and sit and listen to these discourses so that they can go and repeat it to others, so that they can go and tell all these things to others. I am not saying don't do that. But allow it to sink in to you first.

When you stop calculating for getting benefits, you will start tasting life. You will come alive.

Life is not business and it cannot be business. Here, again and again, Arjuna is stuck because of this one point. He thinks that life is business. Of course, Krishna is so patient. He is so compassionate. He is the embodiment of kindness! Literally, inch by inch, He brings Arjuna up. He does not lose His patience. He does not say, 'I told you earlier...'

I can say that Krishna uses at least 100 verses to explain this one concept of *karma sanyāsa yoga*, the paths of Duty and Renunciation. Throughout the Gita, He has used at least 100 verses to explain the concepts of *karma* and *sanyās* that we are about to discuss. But He does this without losing His patience at any point. Not once does He shout at Arjuna. He is an embodiment of compassion. He comes down to the plane of Arjuna and gradually transforms him by reiterating the same teachings in different ways.

The question concerning *karma* and *sanyās*, duty and renunciation, has been asked again and again from time immemorial, and each time, it has been answered. Yet this question remains.

Somebody asked me the other day, 'Why is the Gita still relevant today?' I said, 'Because we never learned.' Why is the Gita still relevant for modern day people? Although it was uttered at least 5000 years ago it is still relevant today. Why? It is simply because man has not learnt his lesson yet! History repeats itself.

The unconscious process never comes to the conscious energy. Man as such is governed to a large extent by the unconscious. He is not even aware of what he is going after most of the time. That is why he goes on and on but never achieves. He thinks he wants something and runs after it. But by the time he gets his hands on it, he wants something else. So there is a constant restlessness within.

This puts man in constant dissatisfaction and depression. Let me tell you that by merely flooding awareness into this depression you can get out of it. I always tell people, if you just allow a single instance of depression to work on you and you move through it with awareness, in the process you will become enlightened. Nothing else is necessary. A single instance of depression is enough. It will completely burn you; you will become enlightened. But we never allow anything to

work on us completely. We are scared to confront our own selves. We just allow the unconscious to take over and rule us instead of boldly facing it and seeing it through.

Life is the greatest master. Nobody can teach us greater things than what life can. Life continuously teaches us. But we never note the points and learn them. We never mark the place where we stopped our journey in this birth. When we stop our journey, at least if we mark the place in this life, saying, 'I covered this much distance, I learnt all these things. In the next birth I will continue from where I left last,' if we do that much, it is enough. When I say birth, I do not mean just the totality of our life. I am referring to each day and night. Each day and night is a birth. It is a life cycle. We do die and get reborn everyday.

Everyday, consciously decide, 'Let me learn one lesson today.' Or if one lesson a day is too much, make it once a week. Tell yourself, 'I will allow one understanding to enter into my consciousness this week.' I tell you, if you had allowed one understanding to enter into your consciousness every week, you would have been enlightened by now. Your life would have been blissful, without any worries.

If you decide every weekend, 'I will observe my life completely during this entire week. I have traveled this much of distance. Let me stop here and mark it.' Next week, you refer back to where you had left and say, 'Yes, this week I will start from here.' If you do this much sincerely, it is more than enough. Your whole life will be transformed.

But the problem is that we always mark in the wrong places.

A small story:

Two friends rented a boat and went fishing. One day, to their great fortune, they managed to catch a hundred fish. One of them instructed his friend, 'Mark this place. Next time we will come straight here and directly start fishing here.'

The next time they were about to set out for fishing again. One of them asked the other, 'Did you mark that place?' The other replied, 'Yes, I put the cross mark in the boat.'

The first one said, 'What a fool you are! If we don't get the same boat, what will we do?'

We also mark, but on the boats, not in life. We never mark where we should, in the bigger picture of our lives. We are so caught up with marking our desires and goals. These markings of desires and worldly goals continuously get washed away and new markings are made. They update themselves based on inputs from the world around us, based on what society has to say. We forget that these markings are temporary and do not reflect the growth within.

What truly matters is the inner transformation, which we never bother to think about. We never allow any understanding to work on us. If we consciously are aware of what we are doing and what our pitfalls are, we can start to learn from them and grow to be better individuals. But again and again we make the same mistakes. May be the scale differs, but the mistakes are the same!

The person who commits the same mistake on a larger scale becomes a leader. The person who commits the same mistake on a smaller scale becomes a follower, that's all. A leader is a person who commits mistakes on a large scale and who hides them, whereas a follower is one who does the same mistakes on a smaller scale and justifies them. That is the difference between a leader and a follower.

I tell you, if you allow even a single lesson to enter into your life, penetrate into it and work on it, your whole life will be transformed. I always tell our ashram *brahmacāris* and *brahmacārinis* (young unmarried boys and girls training on the path of *sanyās*) and our *ashramites* (other ashram residents) to at least do new mistakes every time! To tell you honestly, we are not so intelligent as to even commit new mistakes. We are not even creative and innovative to make new mistakes, that is the problem.

Even if you merely decide not to do the same mistake once more, your life will be transformed. But again and again, we do only the same kind of mistakes because our mind works in the same route. That route is only called *saṁskāra*: a recorded route, an engraved memory. If we take up the life of either *karma* or *sanyās* based on a recorded memory, we will never achieve bliss. We will never be able to reach the eternal consciousness.

Let us analyze these paths of *karma* and *sanyās*.

Let us look a little deeply into the two concepts of *karma* and *sanyās*. *Karma* is normally done out of greed and desires. *Sanyās* is always invariably out of fear, *bhaya*. There is a fear of life. When you are not ready to take the risk, you renounce everything. The fear of getting hurt is the first reason for *sanyās*.

Please be very clear: All the so-called traditional *sanyās* is nothing but running away from the fear of life. *Sanyās* is a way of escapism, turning away from the responsibilities that life presents. When a person is not able to face the hardships of life and is bogged down by it, he takes *sanyās* as an easy escape exit. He is scared of being swallowed by the tides of life. In the name of renunciation, he covers the deep fears.

Then we have people running behind material wealth, greedily, in the name of *karma*. On one side are the people who are running away from fear. On the other side are those who are running towards their greed. Both categories of people are not going to achieve the eternal bliss or consciousness. Both are not on the right track.

On the entire planet earth, only three types of human beings exist: One who has surrendered to greed, one who has surrendered to fear, and third, the one who has surrendered to the supreme intelligence, divine consciousness or eternal consciousness.

The person who has surrendered to greed gets lost. He is caught in the *mūlādhāra cakra*. The *mūlādhāra cakra* is the root energy center at the base of the spine that harbours greed when allowed to. Such a person runs greedily behind many things in life to possess them, which in turn leads to more greed and so he gets caught in this vicious cycle. He literally becomes a slave to greed.

There is a beautiful *Upaniṣad* story:

There are two birds on the same tree. One bird is sitting calmly, enjoying the silence - its own inner space. It is a completely satisfied and fulfilled being. Another bird is sitting a little below, busily pecking at the fruits. It goes to one side of the tree, selects a fruit and eats it. It then returns to where it started, goes to the other side and eats another fruit.

When the fruit is tasty, it enjoys. When the fruit is not tasty, it suffers. It goes to one side, feels the joy, goes to the other side and feels the suffering. It continuously goes from this side to that side. Suddenly, this bird looks up and sees the bird that is sitting silently and thinks, 'How is this bird so calm and beautiful? Let me go nearer and see. Let me talk to this bird.' Slowly, slowly, the small bird moves towards the bird that is sitting peacefully all this time.

As it goes nearer the other bird, the small bird continues to taste more fruits and suffers because the fruits get sour. Suddenly, when the small bird is close enough to the other bird, it realizes that the other bird is nothing but its

own self, which is sitting silently and beautifully watching the small bird getting distracted in its path, suffering with sour fruits! The small bird simply becomes one with the other.

This is a beautiful story! In the same way, as long as you are a *jīvātman*, ordinary soul, you struggle between fear and greed. You go from this extreme to that extreme. You are pulled and pushed. The moment you realize that inside your being, there is something which is untouched, which is undisturbed by your greed and fear, you start traveling towards it. When you go more and more near it, you realize you are *That*. You are that *consciousness*.

Here, Krishna explains the same thing: We are caught between fear and greed. Either we constantly surrender our self to fear or we surrender our self to greed. There are very rare individuals, very rare beings who surrender to intelligence, to divine consciousness.

Always people come and ask me, especially these so-called intelligent people, come and ask me, 'Why should I surrender to the Divine?' You are continuously seeing life as accounts, which is why you ask me this question.

Arjuna asks here, 'Which is more beneficial for me?' Keeping track of accounts is good in business but not in life. Be very clear, in life, accountants will be the worst failures. They can't live because they will be continuously calculating.

People come and ask me, 'Why should I surrender to the Divine? If I surrender, what will I get?'

If you don't surrender to the Divine, you will be surrendering to your fear or greed, that's all.

I am not asking you to surrender to the Divine just to get something out of it. I am not giving any promises or assurance about surrendering to the Divine. But one thing you need to understand, if you don't surrender to the Divine, you will be surrendering to your fear or greed.

An accountant can never be happy. If at all he is happy, he won't be an accountant, he must be simply an intelligent person!

A small story:

A man wants to have an accountant. He interviews a candidate for the post. He asks him, 'Can you do double entry?' The accountant says, 'I can do even triple entry, sir.' The man asks, 'Triple entry. What is that?'

The accountant says, 'The first entry is the original accounts showing the actual income, showing the actual profit. This is for the person who has put more money in the company. The second entry is for showing a small profit for the person who doesn't come to the company regularly, who is somewhere else.'

He continued, 'The third entry is for showing loss for income tax purposes. So I can do triple entry!'

Triple entries be good for business, but when it comes to life, it doesn't work out. Life is beyond calculation.

The moment we ask, 'What will I get by surrendering to the Divine?' we miss the whole idea of surrender.

Venkateshwara (an Indian deity) holds the *cakra* (discus) in one hand that represents fear. In the other hand He has the *śankha* (conch), which represents success. The conch is blown when you achieve success. This represents greed because man is constantly seeking success in everything and is never satisfied.

If you don't surrender to Venkateshwara's *pāda* (feet) and His *pāduka*, His sandals, you will surrender to His conch and discus, that's all. In other words, you will surrender to fear or greed if you don't surrender to His energy. This goes to say that those who constantly approach God for fulfillment of their desires or for refuge for their problems are actually surrendering to greed and fear, symbolized by Venkateshwara's conch and discus. Only very few surrender to the feet of Venkateshwara, which is the ultimate surrender.

Our whole life is running behind greed or fear. The path of *karma yoga*, seeking liberation through action or duty, happens because of greed. The path of *sanyāsa yoga*, seeking liberation through renunciation, happens because of fear.

Neither the path of *karma* (action) nor the path of *sanyās* (renunciation) will help us unless we change our very attitude. If we change the attitude, *karma*, *sanyās*, or anything can help us. All we need to know is this: Don't bother about whether we are a *karma yogi* or a *sanyās yogi*. It is the attitude with which we approach and live life that is most important.

Again and again, Krishna is placing the emphasis on the attitude, on the being. If we don't know the root cause of our actions, why we are living with *karma* or why we pick up *sanyās*, we will not be able to solve our problems.

A small story:

A person goes to a bar, drinks too much and drops right there. The bartender comes and kicks him in the back to wake him up. The next day, the same story repeats. This same person comes, drinks, and again falls down. Again the bartender comes and kicks him in the back to wake him up. On the third day, again this same person comes and says, 'Just give me soda. I don't want anything else.' The bartender asks, 'Why?'

The guy replies, 'I've realized that drinking gives me back pain.'

Be very clear, when we don't know why we are having the back pain, we can never solve it! We should know clearly that the back pain is not because of drinking. It is because we were kicked, we were beaten.

In the same way, our suffering is neither because of *karma* nor because of *sanyās*. Suffering is because of our wrong attitude. And I tell you, with this wrong attitude, be it *karma* or *sanyās*, the path will feel only like a punishment. With the right attitude, be it *karma* or *sanyās*, the path will feel like a true blessing.

With the wrong attitude, if you take *sanyās*, be sure you are going to struggle and suffer. In the same way, with the wrong attitude, if you are taking the path of *karma*, again you are going to struggle and suffer.

If you decide to enter into *karma*, drop the goal. Just enjoy doing the *karma* and don't worry about the goal. Living itself is beautiful. Realize that life itself is beautiful. On the other hand, if we decide to take up *sanyās*, again drop the goal. Don't think *sanyās* is going to have a goal. The goal of a *sanyāsi* (monk) which is renunciation also a goal, which must be dropped. The *karma yogi* runs towards the goal, the *sanyāsi* runs away from the goal.

Krishna says, *sāṅkhya yogou prithagbālaḥ pravādanti na panditaḥ*. Indirectly He tells Arjuna that he has yet to learn, that he is still ignorant.

Only the ignorant man speaks that this thing or that thing is important. Only the ignorant man says that *karma yoga* is different from *sāṅkhya*, the *sanyās*. Here, the words *karma* and *sanyās*, these two words are equated to *karma yoga* and *sāṅkhya yoga*.

Those who are actually learned, I can say those who are actually experienced, say that both *karma* and *sanyās* lead to the same truth. Through both these paths, one achieves the results of both. If we change the attitude of greed in *karma yoga*,

we will drop into the eternal consciousness. If we change the attitude of fear in *sanyās*, again we will drop into the eternal consciousness. Through both, what we are supposed to achieve, we will achieve when we take the right attitude.

So here Krishna says, ‘Only the ignorant person says that one is superior to the other or that they are two different paths. Both the paths are one and the same.’ A person who can travel alone, who is courageous enough, takes the life of *sanyās*. A person who needs somebody’s help or who wants to share his life takes the life of *karma*. It is up to us. Both the paths are one and the same. What is important is having the right reason and the right intent, not what we are doing.

What we are doing is not important. It is our being that is important. These three words should be understood: being, doing and having.

If we are continuously doing, doing only for having, we will never have it. Even when we are having, we will be doing. The man who is doing just for having will never be able to experience or enjoy life because even when he is having, he will be doing.

The man who is established in his being will enjoy both doing and having at the same time. By just being, he will enjoy doing and having. All we need to do is only one thing, a simple technique. The whole thing is now reduced to a one-line message.

Let all our mental thoughts, let all our physical deeds be directed towards gratitude to the Divine.

Don’t work out of fear or greed, because with whatever we achieve out of greed, we are not going to be fulfilled. It is like pouring ghee (clarified butter) into the fire. Can we quench fire by pouring ghee into it? Never! all our actions that are done out of greed will only create more desire and make our senses weak and tired.

In the same way, all our laziness born out of fear will only make our mind restless. We may not be doing things physically, but our mind will be worrying.

If we have become a *karma yogi* out of greed, our senses will be weakened. How much can we run? If we become a *sanyāsi* out of fear, again, because of our vows we may not do anything physically but the whole day we will be sitting and worrying.



A simple truth:

When a man doesn't have money, the problem is money. When he has got money, the problem is sex. When he has got sex, the problem is comforts. When he has got comforts, when everything goes well, he starts worrying about death. He starts bothering about death. He has starts thinking about death. Something or the other will always be going on in his mind.

Don't think that all the people who have become *sanyāsi*, who are sitting in the Himalayas, are in bliss. No! Unless they change their attitude, they cannot experience joy. Unless the attitude changes, they cannot experience bliss.

Bliss is directly related to our attitude. Being, doing and having... our whole life will be in doing and having if we are caught in fear and greed. If we surrender ourselves to the being, doing and having both will happen to us with tremendous ecstasy.

Never work out of greed because whatever we achieve is going to be taken away at the time of death. Never become silent out of fear because there is nothing really to lose. Why should we be afraid? Whether we are afraid or not, everything is going to be taken away at the time of death. So, why be afraid? So in either case, why not we just be blissful then?

This is a beautiful story:

One man went to Ramakrishna Paramahansa and asked for money as a blessing. Ramakrishna usually never blessed anyone for money. This man went to Ramakrishna and asked, 'Master, please bless me that I should have wealth.' Finally, Ramakrishna said, 'Alright, may you have wealth.'

This man used to collect paper from the roads. He would also go from house to house and collect old newspapers. He used to make his money and living by selling it.

The way Ramakrishna blessed him, something drastic happened in his life. Within ten years, he became the owner of a very big newspaper called Ananda Bazaar Patrika. If you are from Calcutta, you will know about this paper. The founder of Ananda Bazaar Patrika is a disciple of Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna just blessed him, 'You will have wealth.' Till today, this newspaper is in circulation.

You will be surprised, he didn't have children. At the end of his life, he said, 'Oh God! Now I realize my mistake! I asked for wealth from my master.'

Throughout my life, I did only one thing. I worked like a donkey, that's all. Nothing else was achieved. I created the whole thing and I will now be leaving it and going away. I just worked, worked and worked for somebody else who will enjoy this wealth now.'

So, if we work out of greed, please be very clear, one day we will repent. One day we will surely repent.

Why do you think parents are so possessive of their children? Parents have some vengeance inside. They think, 'I worked and created so much wealth. I am leaving it for this child. This child must obey my words, he must listen to my words.' All the possessiveness comes because you suffered and created the wealth. You try to control the children as much as you can because of this.

If the wealth is created without suffering, when we give it, it will be graceful too. We will give it gracefully as a gift. We will not bind the recipient in so many ways. We will not torture him. We will not expect him to do so many things. We will not play with our wealth. We will write our will clearly, in an open way.

Why do you think people always write their will secretly? It is so that they can dangle the carrot. It is nothing but dangling the carrot so that the son or daughter is continuously behind them until they die and they read the will.

When a person who has created wealth out of suffering gives that wealth to someone, he gives the suffering also. People come and ask me, '*Swamiji*, I hear that the parents' *karma* will come to the children. Is it true?'

The sins or the merits of the parents will not come to you. But their mental setup will influence you; it will come to you. This is because they will try to force that on you. They will try to force their mental setup on you. They will expect that you should live the way they want you to.

We always try to fulfill our ambitions through our kids. If we want to become a doctor and if we have not achieved it, we try to fulfill our ambition through our kids. We try to fulfill our ambitions through our kids, through the next generation. Please don't do that. If we do that, we will be destroying their life. We will be sharing not only our wealth but our suffering also.

The man who created wealth out of suffering will give the suffering to the person to whom he gives the wealth.

Next thing: If a person is not able to torture his son or the daughter who has received the wealth, he will start suffering himself. If he knows that his son is not

going to listen to him, that the son is not going to live as he wants him to, he will start suffering. He will suffer thinking, 'I am leaving all these things, placing trust upon my son. I don't know what will happen. I don't know what he will do.' When he dies, he will have the worst death. He will be like a yakṣa. He will come back and sit on that property. Be very clear: He will not let even his son enjoy that property. He will come back and sit on that property.

I have seen many litigation cases where the parents give their wealth to their kids, and somehow or other, even after thirty or forty years, the kids will not be able to enjoy that wealth. It means the property is with a yakṣa guarding it. The man has come back and he is sitting as a yakṣa in that property. Neither will he enjoy it nor will he allow others to enjoy it. And God knows when the high court will pass the judgement. The judgement might take its own, sweet time.

Again and again, we share what we create. That's what I always tell people: If the wealth is created out of a pain-body, you will transfer the pain body also to the next generation along with the wealth. It should be created out of just a relaxed mood, out of a voluntary decision or I can say without any strong motivation.

One important thing we should understand: Working without motivation is completely unheard of today.

All the people who are working in the field of the human mind, the psychologists, the psychiatrists, the scientists, always emphasize that without motivation we cannot work. That is why there are so many motivational gurus today. Motivational gurus haunt us. So many motivational gurus wanting to make money by telling others how to be motivated!

Please be very clear: These scientists, psychologists and doctors have come to the conclusion that 'work without motivation is not possible', after doing analysis on diseased patients, not on enlightened beings.

They never had a specimen of a Buddha! They never encountered an enlightened person. That is why they say that work without motivation is impossible.

I tell you, work without motivation is the only real work. Work without motivation will never make us tired! Every moment we will be ecstatic. We will be working out of bliss. Understand this one concept, this one technique.

Further, for the first time, Krishna gives a meditation technique in this chapter. Today, we will practice that technique to achieve the bliss consciousness. Until the

fifth chapter, He was giving only intellectual advice, śāstra. Krishna now thinks that Arjuna has become mature or Krishna realizes that without some technique, it is now impossible to relate with Arjuna.

Krishna realizes, 'If I don't give him a technique, I cannot escape from him!' Masters give meditation techniques in two situations: One is when they see the person is mature enough, the other is when it is better to give some technique, otherwise the person would constantly question them. The person will continue to question, and will not keep quiet.

So I don't know whether Krishna thought that Arjuna has become mature or he thought, 'Let him at least sit quiet for a few minutes with closed eyes!' He gives him a technique. Now we will practice that technique. We will enter into that technique.

Before the technique, He gives a beautiful explanation about the technique in the following verses. Yes, you have a question...?

*Q: Is going into an ashram or being a **sanyāsi** a form of running away? Many people seem to be moving into ashrams only to get away from what they seem to see as the suffering they face in the material world. Will they not face a different kind of suffering in the ashram or the forest too?*

A beautiful question!

A small story:

Three men had been in an asylum for a long time. The doctors felt they had improved and could be released. But just to make sure, the resident doctor gave them a test.

He took them to an empty swimming pool, made them climb the diving platform and asked them to jump into the pool.

The first man jumped and broke his arms. Screaming his lungs out, he was led away back into the asylum. The second man jumped and broke his legs. He too left crying, back into the asylum. The third man went up, looked down and refused to jump. The doctor asked him, 'What happened?'

He said, 'No, I cannot jump'. The doctor was very happy. He signed the third man's release forms. As the man was leaving the asylum, the doctor asked him, 'Why was it that you would not jump?'

The man said, 'I don't know how to swim!'

Right action, wrong reason! Right decision, wrong reason!

This is far worse than doing the wrong thing of making the wrong decision or committing the wrong action. At least then we will be told we are doing something wrong. Someone, like our spouse, parents, children or friends will make it their business to tell us.

Doing the right thing for the wrong reason, no one will know because we are not doing something wrong. Even we will not know, unless we question it ourselves. So nothing will stop us from doing it.

If we move into an ashram for the wrong reasons, we are in deep trouble. That is why I give a trial period of about a year. If you come there because you think you are doing it to achieve something, I will give you time to realize your wrong decision.

Only when you come in for the right reason, for reasons of inner awareness, with no agenda, just to be, will ashram life be the right decision for the right reason for you. You will settle into yourself peacefully, without effort, with no suffering.

In the past many people have tried to be peaceful for the wrong reasons. Those were the monks. The monasteries all over the world were full of such people. But they were dead even while being alive. They could not laugh, they could not love, they could not sing, and they could not dance. They attained peace at the cost of their life. They became utterly cold. Their peace was not a cool phenomenon. It was ice-cold. It was the peace of the cemetery.

And there have been people who tried to attain bliss, like painters, poets, dancers, musicians, and other artists, who lived in the world as passionately as possible. They were alive but very feverish. They were passionate, but the passion was such a fire that it only burned them. Many artists, many poets, have gone mad. Many have committed suicide for the simple reason that they had no idea how to be peaceful. Their bliss consumed them, and they could not contain it.

A true *sanyāsi* is someone entirely different from these two. He is the beginning of a new man: peaceful at the very core of his being and peaceful at the periphery too. This is the ultimate harmony. This harmony can be called God, enlightenment, *nirvana*, or any name that we want to give to it: truth, beauty, liberation.



## Devotion Above Action

*5.5 He who knows, knows that the state reached by renunciation and action are one and the same.*

*State reached by renunciation can also be achieved by action, know them to be at the same level and see them as they are.*

*5.6 Renunciation without devotion afflicts one with misery, Oh mighty-armed one.*

*The wise person engaged in devotion attains the Supreme without delay.*

*5.7 The person engaged in devotion, beyond concepts pure and impure, self-controlled and who has conquered the senses is compassionate and loves everyone.*

*Although engaged in work, he is never entangled.*

*5.8, 5.9 One who knows the truth, though engaged in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, dreaming, and breathing knows that he never does anything.*

*While talking, evacuating, receiving, opening, closing, he considers that the senses are engaged in gratification.*

*yat sām̐khyaiḥ prāpyate sthānaṁ tad yogair api gamyate |  
ekaṁ sām̐khyāṁ ca yogaṁ ca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati || 5.5*

One who knows that the position reached through *sāṅkhya yoga* and *karma yoga* are both one and the same, and that the position reached by *sāṅkhya yoga* can also be achieved by *karma yoga*, sees both of them in the same level and sees things as they are.

Beautiful verse!

One more important thing: All of us are not always *karma yogi* or doers and all of us are not always *sanyāsi* or monks. No *sanyāsi* is for 24 hours a *sanyāsi*. When he surrenders himself to the greed, he is a doer. No *karma yogi* is for 24 hours a doer. When he surrenders to fear, he is a *sanyāsi*.

So be very clear: Whenever we make an optimistic decision, we are a *karma yogi*. Whenever we make a pessimistic decision, we are *sanyāsi*. It is we who play both the roles.

Who is an optimist and who is a pessimist? An optimist is a man who created the airplane. A pessimist is a man who created the seat-belt.

In life you always play both the roles. Sometimes, you are an optimist and sometimes, you are a pessimist.

Here, both can lead to the same goal if the attitude is pure, if the attitude is perfect. One important thing we need to understand: Anything created out of greed will create more greed. Anything created out of fear will create more fear, that's all.

Please be very clear: Whenever we move our body, whenever our body is moved by a particular emotion, that emotion gets settled inside our system. That will become part of our system and that emotion will be created again and again in our system.

Jiddu Krishnamurti, an enlightened master from India made a wonderful statement about emotions arising in the human body.

He says beautifully, 'If you can, try to remain centered, silent, without moving your body when a particular emotion rises in you, without co-operating with it. Within eleven times, or I can say within eleven emotional upsets, if you have managed to be this way, you will be liberated from that emotion.'

Vivekananda, another enlightened master from India says beautifully, 'Enlightened masters and enlightenment is the greatest gift given to planet earth by India.' But the problem is we have given it away as a gift. We are not using it ourselves! While gifting it to others, we forgot how to use it. It started with Swami

Vivekananda, and all the masters who followed have been given away to the world. Indians have forgotten to use what they gave as a gift.

Understand, it is an important thing: If you are caught by an emotion, for example if you are caught in lust, or if you are caught in fear, just eleven times, whenever that emotion rises, whenever that emotion comes up in your being, don't allow your body to co-operate. Don't allow your body to flow with that emotion. Don't allow your body to move with that emotion. Within eleven times, I assure you, you will be liberated from that emotion.

You may think, 'What is this, *Swamiji*? Just eleven times! Is it so easy?' It is easy. All great things are easy. Only we complicate them. We complicate because we don't believe anything that is easy.

A small story:

A person goes to the doctor and asks, 'Doctor, how much will you charge to pull this tooth out?' The doctor says, 'Ninety dollars.' This person asks, 'Ninety dollars just for a two minute job?'

The doctor says, 'I can do it more slowly if you like!'

We don't believe in simple things. We want to complicate things.

Actually, eleven times is too much. I think with all the 'factor-of-safety' idea, Krishnamurti has said eleven times. He might have been afraid of lawsuits, so he might have included the factor-of-safety! If somebody practices for fewer times and they don't get the result, they may sue him! May be that is why he says eleven times.

But I tell you honestly, eleven times is too much. When that emotion rises in you, don't cooperate. Let your body not go behind that emotion. Let you not be taken away by that emotion, whether it is anger or irritation or depression or lust or fear or anything.

Just decide, 'I am not going to be taken away by this emotion.' I tell you, within three or four times, you will be liberated from that emotion because you will learn the technique. You will have the key now in your hand: How not to be taken away by that emotion, how to be centered, rooted in your Self, in your being. Whether it is anger or fear or greed, it gets more power and strength if your body also cooperates with it.

With whatever emotion your body moves, that emotion gets recorded inside your system. And that emotion will happen again and again, many more times, and much more intensely. Both frequency and intensity of that emotion will increase.



There is a beautiful movie, 'What the Bleep Do We Know?' If you find time you should see that movie. In that movie, they beautifully show this very idea that I have just now conveyed to you.

Don't think I have some contract with the movie makers to promote it! No! Once, two of our devotees invited me to come for a show in New York called 'Bombay Dreams'. They invited me. I said that I can sit for fifteen minutes. If it will finish in fifteen minutes, I will come. They said that no show would finish in less than three hours. I said, 'Then it is not for me.' Fifteen minutes is the maximum time I can watch any show. So I didn't watch that. But somehow I watched this movie 'What the Bleep Do We Know?'

I am surprised how these people sit in front of the television for hours together. Real couch potatoes! Something is being shown there on the television and they sit and watch sometimes not even knowing what they are watching! And they will continuously be eating something while watching. The snack box will be full before the program starts. When the program is over, that box will be empty and the stomach will be full. This is such a dangerous habit. It will lead to obesity.

An important thing we should know: Ramanujacharya, Indian philosopher says beautifully, when it comes to '*āhāra-śuddhi*', 'purity of food', when you eat something, you digest not only the food that you eat but you also digest the thoughts which you think while you are eating. So please be very clear: Your eating should be done like worship. The problem is now the worship is also corrupted!

Eating should be done with a deep sincerity. Never ever eat watching the television or reading the newspaper. It will make you dull. When I say dull, understand that we already have enough of *tamas* - laziness - in our system. With this habit, the laziness energy will be significantly enhanced.

Never eat with negative thoughts. And those of you who cook or serve the food, please don't complain at that time.

In India, usually only at the time of serving, the wife will start saying, 'This is not available in the house; that is not available in the house. You are not giving my monthly allowance properly. This has not come to the house properly. That is not here...' They will start the whole story. Never start the house story when you serve or when you cook because the thoughts will also enter the food. Your thoughts and emotions go and settle down into your system.

Anyway, I can never watch anything for more than fifteen minutes. Somehow, this one movie, 'What the Bleep Do We Know?' I sat throughout and watched. I really enjoyed it.

I will explain a concept from that movie. It is the truth, not just projected by them. It is truth from *Vedānta*. They have explained it visually in a very nice manner.

They say that whenever some emotions happen within your system, it is like a shower of rain. The emotion pours like rain. It happens inside your system, in your being. There are particular cells that catch these emotions. For example, if you think with anger, there are particular cells that catch that anger emotion. Not only do they just catch and remain, they start reproducing as well. Each cell will create at least four or five more cells that can catch this emotion.

An important thing we should know is that the basic quality of life is reproduction and expansion. This is the survival instinct. The survival instinct is governed by the *svādiṣṭhāna cakra*, the fear energy center within our body. Reproduction is governed by the *mūlādhāra cakra*, the sex energy center in our body. Both these are closely associated. Fear is associated with the *svādiṣṭhāna cakra* and reproduction is associated with the *mūlādhāra cakra*; both the *cakras* are found very close to each other in our body.

These cells that catch the anger emotion start reproducing and each cell creates five or six more cells. Next time, when the anger shower happens, when the anger rain happens, all these cells will also catch the same emotion. They become the size of the original cells. They grow to the same size. Now these cells also start reproducing. The third time, when the shower happens, all these cells catch the emotion and start storing it.

That is why, every time when we are showered with the same emotion, it becomes stronger and stronger. We are addicted to that emotion. We will not be able to control that emotion.

The first time, if anger is showered on us, if we are affected for ten minutes, then the next time, it will surely become twenty minutes. The third time, it will become half an hour. This is how the emotion becomes stronger and stronger.

In our being, again and again, when we cooperate with these negative emotions, we create the same type of mood, the same type of lifestyle in us.

One more thing: Not only will this emotion get recorded in us, but the big problem is that we will express the same thing on others also. What we have within us is what we will vomit on others also.

If we are working to strengthen our greed, we will be caught by the emotion of greed and we will radiate that emotion of greed. We will vomit that emotion of greed on others.

Next, if we strengthen our fear, again, we will be caught by that emotion of fear and express that emotion of fear and torture others with it.

Be very clear: Warriors are caught in fear. That is why they torture others. They give fear to others. Warriors are the most cowardly people. A real warrior is a person who has conquered his being, who has won his being. Only he can be the real warrior.

If out of fear we are doing anything, we will reproduce the same fear in others.

Now, take a few minutes to sit and analyze, 'Throughout this life, all these years I was driven by greed and fear. What have I achieved? What have I got? Where am I standing? What has really happened?'

Consciously think about it. Consciously allow this idea to work on you. Decide, 'From today, I will not do anything out of greed or out of fear.' Immediately the fear will rise in you, 'What will happen to my bills? Who will pay them? What will happen to my house? Who will repay the mortgages? What will happen to my car? What will happen to my kids? Who will feed them? What will happen to my social prestige and name and fame? Who will maintain it?'

Please be very clear that you have enough energy and strength to maintain yourself without fear and greed. The important thing you need is trust that you don't need energy from fear or greed to run your life. That is the first thing you need to understand. You have enough potential energy to live your life and to achieve what you want.

Mahavira, another great enlightened Jain master from India says, 'When you come down to this planet earth, when you take up the human body and come, you bring enough of energy to live all your desires or to achieve whatever you want to achieve in this life.' You have already brought enough fuel. You don't need fuel from fear or greed.

You always think, 'If I stop fueling myself with fear or greed, I may stop working.' No. There is enough reserve of fuel in you. Enough fuel is available but psychologists can never believe that unmotivated action is possible because they have never seen a Buddha.

Again and again the people who are working in the field of psychology come to a conclusion, 'Only with motivation a man can work.' What motivation have birds got to sing? But the modern day psychologists are so focused on sex that even for

that, they have started giving a meaning! They say that the bird is calling for its partner. They have started interpreting even birds' singing! They can't see anything as it is.

That is why here, Krishna says:

*yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati*

The man who is beyond the pull of fear and greed is the only one who can see things as they are. If you are caught in fear or greed, you will see things only as *you* want, never as they are.

For example, if there is a beautiful, tall building, a man who is caught in greed will have one thought the moment he sees it, 'If I have at least one building like this, how nice it will be!' The man who is caught in fear will think, 'I should not see all these things. They stress me out. I should go and stay in the forest.'

The man who is caught in fear thinks in a particular way. The man who is caught in greed thinks in the other way. But only a person who is liberated from these two emotions will see it as it is.

*yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati*

What IS, he will see that.

Now, decide strongly, 'Throughout my life, I lived either pushed by fear or pulled by greed. Do I want to continue doing that?' As I said earlier, Mahavira says beautifully, 'You don't need energy from greed or fear.' And I tell you, for a person who is trained by society, who is conditioned by society, it will be very difficult to believe this truth that you don't need energy from greed or fear to live.

I know you are all sitting here out of politeness, thinking, 'He is speaking. Let us listen. What can be done?' Just because you are sitting, it is not that you are able to believe what I am saying or you are able to trust my words. I know that thousands of questions are arising in your mind.

But I tell you: Your whole past, whatever your age is, maybe 30 or 40 or 50 or 60, that many years, you lived only fueled by fear and greed. Just give ten days for Mahavira.

Decide, 'For the next ten days I will trust the words of Mahavira.' Mahavira says, 'You don't need fuel from fear or greed because you have brought enough energy. When the Divine sends you to earth, when you take birth, God sends you with whatever you need.'

In India, when the daughter is given away in marriage, they send a whole set of household items, from a broomstick to a car. They send everything with the daughter. And they give a dowry also.

I don't know when India will understand and come out of the idea of dowry. If any of you have taken dowry and if you really want a spiritual life, the first thing you need to do is, tomorrow itself, give it back. Give back whatever things you took from your in-laws' house. If your in-laws are not alive, give it to your wife.

I tell you honestly, if you keep dowry in your house, *Lakshmi*, the goddess of riches, will never fill your house with Her full blessing.

You see, there are two things. *Lakshmi* has got two manifestations in your life. One is just outer comfort. The other one is inner bliss.

The man in whose house dowry is kept, I can assure you that he will never have the inner *Lakshmi*. He may think he is having the outer *Lakshmi*. What is the difference between the poor man and the rich man? The poor man sits on the ground and worries. The rich man sits on the sofa and worries; that's all, nothing else. The size of the sofa is a little bigger, nothing else.

Anyway, like how a daughter is sent with everything to the in-laws' house, in the same way the Divine sends you with everything to this planet. In *Vedanta* that is what we call *prārabdha karma*. When you come down you bring enough of energy for your senses and body to run and acquire whatever it needs, enjoy whatever it needs and live life blissfully.

You have brought everything. The only problem is you don't trust that you have brought everything. And one more thing: After coming down, you accumulate more and more desires from others.

If you have come down with ten desires, you have got enough energy to fulfill those ten desires. But after coming down here, you collect some more desires from your friends, brothers, sisters and others and then you try to work out all those desires also.

Please be very clear: Work out only your desires. Let you not waste your life in working out others' desires. You are wasting your life if you start working out others' desires. When we go into the chapter about desires, we will go deeply into desires - how they are created and how we run behind them. For now, this much of understanding is enough.

Decide clearly, 'Let me not be fueled by fear or greed.' And I tell you, just giving ten days for this one idea is enough. Decide, 'For the next ten days, I will work only out of my joy and bliss. I will do everything out of my pleasant mood, out of my joy.' I can assure you, it will transform your life. Anyway, I am going to be here even after ten days. If it does not work out, come and catch me! I tell you, just living ten days out of joy and bliss rather than fear and greed will transform your whole life.

This one single idea can liberate you straightaway from all bondages.

One more thing: When you practice this, for the first few days you will feel a little unsettled. Whenever any desire comes up, say 'No.' Whenever any fear comes up, say 'No.' For the first few days you will feel a little unsettled because a new inner space is created. You will feel some emptiness, a vacuum. Don't worry.

In a few days you will beautifully settle with the new system. You will settle with that emptiness. That emptiness is what Buddha calls *śūnya* or *nirvāṇa* - working from *śūnya* consciousness, working from bliss consciousness, not being driven, pulled or pushed by fear or greed.

Just for ten days decide, 'I will work only out of joy. I will not let fear or greed enter my mind.'

Of course, in ten days, you may fail a few times. Don't worry about it. Starting this way is much better than staying in fear of failure. See, when you have the fear of failure you will never start. Start! Even if you fail, it is ok. You will know the trick of the trade. At least you know the technique and you know where you are a failure. If you don't even start, you will not even know where you are a failure.

I tell you honestly, if you start and continue, it will transform your whole life. It will give you such great strength and courage that invariably you will be liberated. Don't be bothered about the initial feeling of emptiness.

It is like this: When our mother-in-law dies, we will feel empty for a few days! Or if one of the people with whom we are living dies, for a few days we will always feel that we are missing something. If we don't have anybody to nag us we will feel that we are missing something!

This desire and fear continuously nag us. So for the next ten days when you practice this, you will feel that you are missing somebody who was continuously nagging us. Don't worry. You will settle into that new consciousness. Your whole being will become new. You will be a new personality.

This is an important thing: Trust that you have enough energy to run without fear and greed. Only small kids need candy. For you, trust should be enough. Kids will work only when you show the candy. And they will keep quiet if you threaten them that you will discipline them.

Only when you are a small child, you need fear or greed to make you work. Now, you are all grown-up. Still, why do you need fear or greed? Still, if you need fear or greed, you are mentally retarded! Please be very clear that you have grown physically but not mentally.

One more thing: In just ten days, you will not lose your wealth. Is there anybody who thinks, 'If I practice for ten days, I may lose all my wealth?' I tell you, if so, that wealth is not worth having. It is better you lose it. In ten days if you can lose it, do you think it is worth having it? If it can be lost so easily, then it is not worth having. The earlier it is lost, the better it is for your being.

Let you remove the tremendous stress and load from your inner space. Decide, 'For ten days, I will do all my action out of deep bliss, out of a settled mood.'

If you practice this, a constant irritation that remains in you without your knowledge, will disappear. Knowingly or unknowingly, you carry constant irritation in you. That is why all of us are just waiting to burst, explode. Any small thing, we just shout, vomit words. We are waiting for reasons to shout. Any small thing happens, we get irritated. We shout, 'Don't you know? Don't you have sense? Why are you doing this? Why are you doing that?'

From morning to night, constantly, even for small things, we always shout, explode.

Look into yourself: How many of you can honestly understand and agree that you carry that constant irritation in you? Raise your hand. (*A few raise*) Others are not honest! Don't think you are not carrying it. Everyone carries it. This irritation we carry in our inner space is because of fear and greed.

Let you be liberated from it from today.

There is uneasiness between you and your being. That uneasiness expresses continuously on others. That uneasiness is what I call *dis-ease*. That *dis-easiness* between you and your being is what I call disease.

We carry this *dis-ease* because we are putting the wrong fuel in our engine. If the wrong fuel is added into our engine, we know that a different type of sound will come out and a different type of smoke will be emitted! If the fuel is not pure, the engine will create a different type of sound.

A small story:

Husband and wife were traveling by car. They stopped at a signal. Suddenly, next to them they saw a Mercedes Benz car. The husband said, 'Last night, in my dream, I was driving a beautiful Mercedes Benz car like this.' The wife said, 'Yes, yes, I heard the engine sound!'

Sound sleep: Sleep for them and sound for others!

Be very clear: If the fuel is not pure, we will have a different sound and a different smoke. If we are carrying the constant irritation in us, the fuel is not pure.

So decide that just for ten days, you will not put the fuel of fear and greed in your vehicle. You will suddenly feel a new energy coming up from your being - pure enthusiasm, causeless auspicious energy. Causeless auspicious energy is what we call *Shiva*. In Sanskrit 'Shiva' means causeless auspiciousness, reasonless energy.

I tell you, it is possible to live with that reasonless energy, the unmotivated energy. Only two things are needed for that. The first thing is trust that you have that energy. Next thing is, starting to live it. Only these two things are needed to reach the divine consciousness.

When we start working with the causeless auspicious energy, we become Shiva. Otherwise, we are *śava* (dead body).

Here, Krishna does not refer to renunciation the way we traditionally understand it. Normally we think renunciation is giving up everything, especially responsibility. Just by so-called renunciation, if we just go to the Himalayas and try to sit and meditate, we cannot become a *sanyāsi*.

When we use the word 'renounce' the way we understand it, we exclude something. Exclusion can never be the solution. When we say 'I should give up or avoid something', we exclude some creation of Existence.

When we try to renounce the world, we are renouncing the creation of Existence. We are trying to prove that we are more intelligent than Existence. Our renunciation then becomes a show of our ego, even though this may not seem to be very obvious to us.

Actually, we try to renounce because we want to escape from the situation. We just see what is creating the trouble and decide what we should be renouncing. What is creating trouble for us can never be the outer world things like situations or people around us. How can they control us? It is our attitude of fear and greed,



the projections of our mind that are really the cause of all the trouble. Our mind continuously creates subtle expectations every moment of how things should be, how people should be, how your life should be.

The mental setup needs to change from running away from something due to fear of it to facing the reality. Running away from material pleasures due to fear of facing reality or fear of facing the guilt imposed by society, cannot be called renunciation.

Just sit down for five minutes and be aware of how you perceive situations in those five minutes. Just look at everything that you think, feel and do with awareness, and you can understand what I mean.

When we come to a deep awareness and understanding of our own self and are able to live as a witness to everything that goes on around us, unaffected by situations and people around us, we become a realized soul.

A small story:

A young *sanyāsi* lived across the road from a beautiful courtesan. The *sanyāsi* was all the time trying to meditate. The courtesan, on the other hand, carried on with her way of earning money. Many men came and went from her house.

The *sanyāsi* used to try his best to concentrate on his meditation, but his attention was more on the young woman and he kept cursing her for the kind of immoral life that she was leading. The courtesan, on the other hand, was not even aware of the *sanyāsi* staying across the street.

Even though the courtesan was involved with her lifestyle, with her way of earning money, she was immersed in her love for Lord Krishna and spent as much time as she could in praying to Him and playing with His image.

The *sannyasi* and the courtesan died on the same day and reached the gates of Lord Yama, the Lord of Death.

On reaching the abode of Yama, the courtesan was sent to heaven. The *sanyāsi* was shocked but thought that if the courtesan can be sent to heaven, he would get the ultimate royal treatment. To his surprise, Yama sent him to hell.

The *sanyāsi* expressed anger at the unfairness of the whole justice of Yama. Yama calmly explained to the *sanyāsi*, 'All your life, under the guise of meditating, you were harboring lust for the courtesan. She, on the other hand, despite whatever she was doing, was totally focused on God.'

If we try to do things due to the conditionings and morality imposed by society, we will become hypocrites. Even renunciation will be just a farce. It will also lead to misery just like the life of material pleasures leading to pain due to the push and pull of desires.

*Brahmacarya* literally means living with reality. It does not mean celibacy, as you understand it. When we are ecstatic unto ourselves, when we live completely in the moment, flowing spontaneously in tune with the wonderful symphony of Existence, we are true *brahmacāris*.

When we are completely in the present, totally involved in what we are doing, that we become the action itself, we no longer exist as the doer. That is when we have truly renounced. We have then renounced the sense of 'I am doing', the ego. Then we are true *sanyāsis*.

But we don't want to renounce our mind that continuously creates fantasies and gets us worked up when reality does not match our imagination. All we need is to experience that behind the shallow emotions that exist in the periphery, at the very core of our being is a solid, silent center in us that is absolutely unaffected by the external incidents. It is a pure witness to everything that goes on and that is eternal and eternally pure.

Don't try to go to the Himalayas to escape from the world. Create the Himalayas within you. Realize the silent center in you. Look at the cause and address the issue rather than addressing the symptoms.

You see, renunciation is going beyond desires and when I say desires, I mean all desires, including desirelessness. We think desires include the usual desires for money, power, prestige, relations and all such material things. I tell you, the desire to be spiritual and the desire to attain God is also a desire. The moment we say, 'I want to achieve liberation, renunciation,' we are holding onto a desire. The only thing is that the desire is not in the standard list of material desires. It is still a desire; it is still a product of the mind. The mind always hankers after something in the future. It can never exist in the present.

When we desire something, be very clear that we are working in the plane of the mind, whatever the desire may be. Only when we drop all desires, when we are completely at ease and ecstatic in the very present moment, we have gone beyond the clutches of the mind and we can see reality as it exists here and now. Otherwise, whatever may be the desire, we will always live in our world of illusion, of *māyā*, because the future is unreal, it is an illusion.

The real, the present, can never be comprehended by the mind because it is way beyond logic. That is why Existence can never be understood by the mind. The mind can only philosophize. It cannot experience. And the truth can only be experienced.

All that we can imagine about God is still an imagination. God or Existence is beyond all that we know because Existence is beyond the small purview of the mind. How can the limited mind even come close to understanding the vastness and the splendor of Existence?

Vivekananda said that, to him Ramakrishna was greater than God Himself. God was just a concept in Vivekananda's head. Ramakrishna, the guru, was a living entity, a living master who showed Vivekananda God, who gave him the experience of God. The guru is therefore even greater than God Himself because the guru is the bridge for man to experience God.

How can we desire that which cannot be even known? All our desires can be based only on what we know or what we can imagine based on what we have seen and known, right? How can we desire God whom we have never known?

How can we desire enlightenment? We can always desire enlightenment in a way that fits the limited understanding we have of it based on what we have read or heard about enlightened masters. But understand, that is still our imagination. It is based on what our mind has come up with as to what enlightenment could be.

I tell you, you can never possess, you can never achieve enlightenment. Only enlightenment can possess you. It happens to you when you drop all desires.

Actually, our true nature is neither pure nor impure. It is something beyond purity and impurity. This is what we call *viśuddhi* - beyond purity and impurity. When your *viśuddhi cakra*, the energy center in the throat region is awakened, we start nearing our true nature.

Whether we accept it or not, believe it or not, we are bliss. Our very nature is bliss.

Our true nature itself is self-control. When we realize and experience that our being is pure bliss, the other emotions automatically drop. Until that point they mask our true nature.

When we allow ourselves to be our true nature, to be bliss, we live spontaneously. We respond with intelligence instead of through programmed

unconscious responses. Then it is not a problem to control the senses because they are under the control of the ultimate Existence. There is no question of having to control them.

In the Mahabharata war Krishna drives Arjuna's chariot. The horses represent the senses held beautifully in control by the divine charioteer. He drives the being represented by the warrior, in the body represented by the chariot towards victory, towards bliss. When the individual consciousness surrenders control to the Divine, the Divine controls the body-mind-spirit and steers one towards one's true nature, bliss.

Society teaches us from a very young age what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad. So, we have programmed reactions, fixed perceptions about everything. The moment we see a situation, we react in the manner we have been taught. Note that we only react, not respond. With conscience, we can only react. We can only react by looking up our database of the past, what we did in a seemingly similar situation, what was the reaction of people then.

If what we did was appreciated, endorsed, we will react in the same fashion that we did before. If people around us did not like what we did, we will feel uncomfortable and to remove the discomfort, we will now react in a manner that we think will be acceptable to others. This is what happens all the time. It may not be very obvious to us because reacting like this has become a way of life for us.

We have forgotten what it is to respond with intelligence. Please be very clear: No situation can be exactly the same as before. How can it be? Can a river flow in exactly the same way at two different points? No! The very water would have changed from the time it flows from one point to the other even if the two places look exactly the same when seen from outside.

Life is like a river. It is continuously changing, continuously in flux. Existence is energy. It can never repeat itself. Every moment is unique.

Because we see it from the limited perception of our mind, because the mind tends to always analyze and categorize, we categorize life as well into different categories. We say, 'These are pleasant situations, those are unpleasant situations, this is good, that is bad, this is right, that is wrong, this should happen, that should not.' It is not Existence that makes these distinctions but us.

If we can just understand this much, if we can allow this understanding to penetrate us, we can simply relax. We will then allow our consciousness to respond. Understand: Conscience is a very poor substitute for consciousness.

Have the courage to live life with intelligence, with consciousness and awareness, with spontaneity. See what a wonderful difference it makes to every moment of your life! Just this small change in attitude can do wonders for you; every moment will then be a celebration!

When the intelligence happens, the compassion also descends. Compassion for the whole world automatically happens in you because you see yourself in each and every one. How can you feel anything but compassion then? That is why masters can only feel compassion to everyone and that is why they feel responsibility towards the whole world.

When we flow in tune with Existence, we become a channel for the divine energy to flow through us. If the bamboo can remain hollow, it will become a beautiful flute and simply the air from the lips of the Divine will come out of the flute as heavenly music, as beautiful notes. Instead, if the bamboo is blocked with dirt in the form of ego, it will remain dead and can only be used for carrying a dead body!

These verses of Krishna are very powerful, but often misinterpreted.

Many people use them conveniently to justify their actions. It is like you commit a murder and then claim you didn't do it but your hands did it!

Be very clear: Not being the doer does not mean we give up responsibility for our actions. It means exactly the opposite. When we are so involved in the action, when we are completely relaxed, we are overflowing with compassion and love, and we just do out of the blissful energy in us.

You must have noticed in your life, when certain people act in what would normally be seen as disrespectful manner, they still don't come across as disrespectful. The energy behind the action is what decides the effect and the perception of the action.

Even in our ashram, I sometimes seem to be harsh with the residents and when I fire them it will be just open, direct firing. But not a single person has left the ashram because he or she was fired! When masters scold, the energy behind the firing is only of compassion; they do everything only for our growth. The energy behind the words of firing carries a tremendous power of transformation and if we are just open to receiving it, it will simply rid us of the blocks and tumors in our system and we can simply flower.

When we are complete and total in what we do, our whole intelligence, our whole energy will be behind the act. When we are truly involved in any action, we become the action. The action and we are no longer separate. On the other hand, if we do something without being fully involved, our energy is not completely behind the action. Energy is intelligence. So, when our energy is not total, be very clear, our intelligence is not completely behind the action.

When the energy behind the action is total, whatever we do will always propagate the blissful energy that is behind the action. That is why even a simple technique like watching the breath given by Buddha can be so powerful. But even a seemingly big action of moral good does not have the desired energy and effect.

Another very important understanding from this verse is this: Every moment, every action, whether it is talking or breathing or seeing, should be done with awareness. That is true meditation. I always tell people, meditation is not something you do for a fixed amount of time during the morning or the evening. It is not a quantity that can be added to your life.

I have seen so many people who claim that they have been meditating for 30, 40 or 50 years. What they mean is that they have been sitting with closed eyes, doing some breath control, trying to concentrate and all such techniques. But even after so many years, the person inside remains exactly the same. Absolutely no transformation has happened.

Meditation is actually a quality that needs to be added to our life. It should permeate the very way in which we view life, the attitude with which we perceive everything. When we infuse awareness into every action, we are in meditation.

So how to be in complete awareness? We can be aware only when we can distance ourselves from what is happening. When we can witness the scene without getting involved in it ourselves, only then can we watch the scene clearly. Otherwise we assume some role in the scene. When that happens, we create some vested interest in it. We have some expectation that things should happen in a certain way that we consider beneficial to us. The moment we get involved, the distance between the scene and us has dropped and we can no longer be the witness. Then we can never see things as they are.

It is just like when we are in a dream. When we are in the dream, we don't realize it is a dream. We think everything that is happening is reality. The moment we wake up from the dream we realize in a flash that it was just a dream. It has no basis, no significance whatsoever.

The way we are living life now is exactly the same. We are living life in the dream of the future and the past. And we think that the dream is reality. We are caught up in the dream, thinking it is reality.

The reality is actually in the present. When we realize this, we simply wake up to the true reality from the dream of illusion. Then, we understand that the senses, body and mind are not us. We are something much beyond these. With this awareness we become blissful.

**Q:** *Swamiji, I am confused by the word bliss. All I understand is that it is the same as happiness or joy. But you say it is not. Please explain.*

Bliss is the state of being spontaneous, being in the present, responding, and not reacting to what happens around you.

To be spontaneous means to live moment to moment, to respond to that which is, with no prejudice, with no mind, with no past and no future, with no time at all. Then suddenly there is a meeting, a meeting between you and Existence. That meeting is bliss, that meeting is God.

To be spontaneous means to be responsible to the present moment. People are ruled by their past. Life goes on changing every moment but the mind remains clinging to the past. There is a gap between the mind and life now. Anything that comes out of the mind is never going to be a *real* response. It is only a reaction. And it always falls short. It can't reach the target. It either goes above or goes below the past, as it knows nothing of the present.

Bliss is a totally different phenomenon from joy, pleasure and happiness. It is not pleasure, because it has nothing to do with the body. It is not happiness; happiness is of the mind and is very momentary. It just comes and goes and keeps you in turmoil. You can never trust it. It is bound to betray you. That is its very nature. Bliss is not even joy, because joy is of the heart.

Bliss is beyond all three; it is of the spirit. It is not something you choose. It has to happen. *It* chooses you. To experience it a person has to stop identifying himself as the body, mind and heart. It is eternal. Once it comes, it is forever. Then one can trust, relax and rest. It can't be stolen, it can't be taken away, and it can't be burned. Even death is impotent as far as bliss is concerned. One who has known bliss has known something deathless.

The search is to find something that is eternal, that is bliss. And the way to obtain it is through meditation. Meditation takes us beyond the body-mind, because meditation is not identifying with all that which we have become identified with: *I am not the body or the mind or the heart*. When this understanding arises in us meditation has flowered. In that flowering is bliss.

Why do so many people choose to be in misery while few choose to be in bliss? All of us claim that we want to be in bliss. Then why do we end up in misery? The reason is that the more miserable we are, the bigger our ego becomes. The ego feeds on misery, on negativity, on darkness; that is its food and nourishment. If we choose to be blissful, if we choose to be a song, we will have to risk one thing, only one thing: the ego, because that is the only discordant note in our being. We will have to drop the idea that 'I am'. We will have to learn a totally different language – that 'God is and I am not'. 'I' and God cannot exist together. That is impossible. Either 'I' can exist or God can exist.





## Controlling the Mind

*5.10 He who acts without attachment, giving up and surrendering to the eternal consciousness,*

*He is never affected by sin, in the same way that the lotus leaf is not affected by water.*

*5.11 The yogis, giving up attachment, act with the body, mind, intelligence,*

*Even with the senses for the purpose of self-purification.*

*5.12 One who is engaged in devotion, gives up attachment to the outcome of one's actions and is centered, he is at peace.*

*One who is not engaged in devotion, and is attached to the outcome of one's action, becomes entangled.*

*5.13 One who is controlled, giving up all the activities of the mind, surely remains in happiness in the city of nine gates (body),*

*Neither doing anything, nor causing anything to be done.*

Time and again Krishna talks about detachment. This is the whole crux of the Gita. This detachment is renunciation. Renunciation of attachment is true renunciation.

You can give up all material possessions and move into a forest or an ashram, but if the mind still hankers for those possessions, renunciation has not happened. It has happened in the body, but not in the mind.

One can still be very much in the material world, busy with wheeling and dealing, and yet be totally detached about the outcome. Action without attachment is renunciation. It is only this renunciation that leads to liberation.

See the lotus flower; it grows in a dirty pond; its stalk is completely inside the dirty water. But the flower is so beautifully above the water. It is so beautiful, that when someone looks at it, you can see the beauty of the flower and the dirt around it is hardly noticed! Similarly, when you are neck-deep in the activities of the world and yet unaffected by what goes on, when your core is undisturbed, you have reached the goal of renunciation.

A small story:

A master was walking with his disciple when they came to a river. The disciple asked, 'Master, are we going to cross this river now?' The master calmly replied, 'Yes, we are. And be careful not to wet your feet.'

The disciple could not understand what the master was saying. The master was trying to tell him that spirituality is all about crossing the ocean of life without getting your feet wet. Spirituality is not about running away from worldly things. Be very clear about this.

A beautiful story about Swami Brahmananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa:

One day Swami Brahmananda was meditating in Brindavan. A devotee came and placed a costly blanket before him as an offering. Swami Brahmananda said nothing.

He just silently observed what was going on.

A couple of hours later, a thief came by, spotted the blanket, came up to him and took away the blanket. Still, the Swami watched in the same way, silently, with no reaction.

Some of the junior disciples were very perturbed that a costly blanket given to him by a devotee had been stolen. However, it made no difference to Brahmananda.

Another story from the life of Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi:

One day some thieves entered Ramana Maharishi's ashram. They took whatever little they could find and before leaving, even gave him a blow.

Bhagavan showed no reaction. Even the pace of his breathing did not alter during the incident!

These realized souls were so centered in themselves that the outer world incidents happening in the periphery did not affect their core in any way. When we can become like this, we won't internalize the outer world incidents. We will not get caught in the sway of emotions and in the push and pull of fear and desires.

The basic principle, the basic truth behind imbibing this sense of centeredness is really this: Existence is a loving mother caring for us every moment, providing all that we need. When this understanding happens, we surrender to Existence. The wave drops into the ocean, blissfully aware that it is a part of the ocean. It no longer feels it is a separate entity trying to fight Existence, thinking that the ocean, the Whole, is its enemy.

Surrender needs to happen out of a deep understanding, not out of a superficial acceptance of the inevitable. If it happens out of acceptance, it will be just a compromise. There is no point in saying, 'Oh, it is destiny. It is written on my forehead and it is foretold by the stars.' This is not true. We have free will and we can do what we want. We have to accept the flow of life with the true understanding that we are being taken care of. When this awareness happens out of deep understanding, it is beautiful. It is total and it is true.

One more thing about this is important. To whom or to what we surrender is not important. What is important is the surrender itself.

Swami Vivekananda, in his commentary on Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, says that all our prayers to God do only one thing: they awaken our own inner potential energy. When we pray intensely, our own inner potential energy is awakened and it showers its blessings on us in the form that we believe as God, irrespective of what form we worship.

Having the wisdom or *buddhi* to understand that Existence cares for us, and surrendering to Existence is the ultimate intelligence. Realizing that Existence is not just a brute force or power but that it is intelligent energy is the key to a life of bliss.

Again and again, in all the verses so far, Krishna is repeating a single point in various ways: action without attachment.

Again and again, He emphasizes that life happens only when we live as a witness to everything that happens around us, when we do not internalize external

incidents. He again and again says that we just have to watch what is happening around us. We should not let what happens outside affect us, affect our inner space.

The moment we catch this thread and start living life this way, we will find that all our troubles simply disappear. It is not that anything outside has changed. It is not that situations have changed or people have changed. It is just that what we wish to see has changed.

Of course, the way in which we live automatically creates an effect, a transformation in others as well. We attract incidents that fall in tune with our desires and thoughts. When we are blissful inside, whatever happens outside will also be blissful. This is because what we see outside is just a projection of what is inside us. It is just a mirror.

It has been scientifically proven that the results of experiments conducted by different researchers under identical conditions vary depending on the mood of the scientists. In one study of elementary particles such as quarks, scientists were amazed that the behavior of these particles varies with different observers. What we see is our reality. If we see without wishing to change anything, we are in tune with reality, that's all.

So whatever happens outside is always for our good if we just watch with this understanding. Rather than analyzing and trying to control all the time, we will be at peace.

Even the same situation will be seen in a completely different way when we witness. Automatically, no emotion can sway us because now we are just witnessing, we no longer have any vested interest in the situation.

We are no longer operating from the mind, analyzing and categorizing. The incident is there, the person is there, we are there. That's all. Our state is in no way affected by what others say or do. Then, we are masters unto ourselves.

You see, we are never totally involved in anything that we do. Take a simple example of what we do when we feel hungry. We eat something to satisfy the hunger. But do we completely enjoy the food? Do we even focus on the food we eat?

Most often we are thinking about everything other than the food when we are eating, 'What should I complete at work before I leave for home?' 'What do I need to make for lunch tomorrow?' 'Where should I go this weekend?' There is always

something or the other in our mind when we are eating. We are actually dumping food into our system without awareness.

That is also the reason why we tend to overeat. Be very clear, we can never overeat if we eat with awareness. Just being aware of what we are putting into our system is enough to control with intelligence what and how much we are eating.

The person who is aware, who is in the present, is completely involved every moment. He feels the hunger completely through every cell of the body when hunger happens. He lives the hunger totally. When the food is before him, he enjoys every morsel of the food completely. Every cell of his body feels satisfied, energized with the food.

Just like having the sense of taste is very natural when we eat with awareness, so it is with all the senses.

A small story:

Once a man went to a Zen master and asked him, 'Master, please tell me what is meditation.'

The master replied, 'When I eat, I eat. When I sleep, I sleep.' The man was perplexed. He asked the master, 'Master, what you are saying is what *you* do. But, please tell me what meditation is.'

The master replied, 'This is meditation. If you can eat totally when you eat, if you can sleep totally when you sleep, you are in meditation.'

Just being totally involved in whatever we do is meditation. Just living in the present moment, enjoying the present moment is meditation.

You must have experienced in your own life, when you are intensely involved in something, you forget yourself. It can be anything that you do. It can be as simple as coloring or painting or reading or anything. When you go deep into it, you forget yourself.

When you have an intense headache, just try doing something interesting very deeply; your headache will go away.

You see, when there is a headache, the body is intelligent enough to allow energy to flow to that part of the body. But we resist that energy flow by being aware of the headache. When we remember our head, what we actually remember is the headache. We associate headache to head. So whenever we remember our head, we

are actually aware of the headache. Because we are continuously aware of our head, our headache continues to bother us.

When we forget about the head, we drop the resistance to the head ache and so the energy flows and heals the headache.

Or you can even try another method where you intensely watch like a witness, the energy flowing to the head to heal it. Just look at the energy flow with full curiosity. Be a complete outsider and not participate in the headache. Allow the energy flow to that area and work on it.

You can use this as a technique for dissolving pain, physical pain in any part of your body. Focus on that part without thinking about the pain, with curiosity. Initially the pain may seem to increase, but soon it will reduce and disappear.

When we go deeply into any emotion, only that emotion remains and we cease to exist. This is what we mean by 'totality'.

This moment of 'you' disappearing, you may experience for a just a few seconds in your current lifestyle. But if you work on being intense and total in everything, this experience of 'you' disappearing will happen more often to you and for longer periods also. Soon, you master the art of doing work intensely, and just being absent. We become independent of the work that goes on outside.

Here, Krishna gives us a technique to realize who we are. By giving up attachment to the sense objects, by dropping all false identifications with the body, senses and mind, we can live life with intelligence and this leads us to self-purification.

Krishna tells us that our job is only to do the work, not to be concerned about the results.

We need to keep doing things because we have so much loving energy inside us. We can just exude energy without any reason or any expectation. When we are like this, we are not bothered about the results.

When I say we are not bothered about the results, I don't mean that out of a frustrated or cynical conclusion, we are not bothered. What I mean is that we don't even know to expect results because we are continuously moving and expressing our blissful inner energy, that's all. So we can't even say that we don't expect results. We are just living in the present moment and doing whatever that comes in our way to do. We take things as they come. We do not worry about what comes

out of what we are doing at the present moment. We are just flowing joyfully, that's all. We flow with the universal energy. This flowing energy is real love.

When we identify ourselves with our body, mind, with our ego, we alienate ourselves from the rest of Existence. Instead of playing our role in the divine drama as an actor, we start thinking that we are the actor and we actually go through all the emotional turmoil that we were just supposed to enact. When we become entangled thus in our role, we miss the whole joy of the drama and feel that life is a big trauma!

In the same way, when we just do what we have at hand, what we are supposed to do at the present moment, and when we are not bothered about the result, we are always happy. Once we start thinking about the result of our actions, we start to entangle ourselves in that worry and we lose the joy of doing what we are doing at this moment.

When we are established in ourselves, we are automatically in peace irrespective of anything that exists or does not exist around us. If we are centered in ourselves, we are not worried about what the result of our actions is going to be. We are not bothered about the result because we have given our best.

Once a man went to Ramana Maharishi, enlightened master from India, and said, 'Bhagavan, I want peace!'

Ramana replied, 'From your own statement, just remove the word 'I', remove the word 'want' and what remains is peace!'

All our want for peace is all a want. We don't know how not to want, how to be satisfied as we are. Just think, how can we want something like peace that by its very nature has the absence of want as the criterion to be able to exist? When we start to want peace, we create desires in us. That desire drives us to do various things for getting peace and we once again start to worry about the results of those actions. These worries take us away from peace and then again we want peace. So this becomes a vicious circle. We wanted peace in the first place; so we do something to fulfill that want. Doing something creates worry and then once again we want to be free from these worries and be peaceful.

This is a vicious circle because we *want* peace. When we drop the idea of wanting peace, when we can just *be* and let Existence take care, peace automatically happens. By dropping the want or the desire for peace and by living in the present moment with whatever we have, we are already in peace. So absence of want is the criterion to be peaceful.

Some people say that they want to be left peaceful without worries. The peace they are talking about is not a living peace; it is a dead peace. It is a lifeless and dormant peace as a result of not knowing how to handle the various emotions in life. It is a peace that they crave because life is too much for them to handle. It is like saying 'sour grapes' and moving away. They haven't got solutions for how to handle life so they just want to escape.

Real peace is something that is in us all the time irrespective of what is going on outside. We are simply happy unto ourselves. Our peace is in no way related to or dependent on the people and situations around us.

Real peace is nothing but the bliss that we feel inside ourselves. When peace is born out of bliss, it keeps us as well as others in a peaceful state. When we are satisfied with ourselves, we do not depend on anything external to be peaceful.

Actually, with modern man, because of all the influences from media and the internet, a cerebral layer has formed. Man relates only with the imagination and fantasies that he has collected from the media. He can no longer relate with reality. If he had collected the images from reality, it would be fine because these exist in reality. But he starts to relate with fantasies. He lives in that imaginary world and does not see what he really has. Once he associates with that imaginary world, he is no longer in the present moment. He is already dreaming.

Even if the dream gets fulfilled, the moment it gets fulfilled, the mind will start running behind a new pursuit, a new imagination. Only when it does this can the mind survive. If there was nothing to run behind, the mind or ego cannot exist.

We don't understand that every tomorrow comes only as today. When the tomorrow comes as today, we simply miss it because we are now looking at tomorrow once again!

When we work without unnecessarily thinking about the result, all our energies will be used towards realizing the goal. The energy will not be dissipated in imagining the results. The power of desire, *icchā śakti*, will be converted to the power of action, *kriyā śakti*. The desire may initially be a goal, but what is important is the path that the action must focus on and not the end result. The goal is merely a byproduct.

Suppose a child is playing with some small toy and you bring him a new big toy. If you take away the small toy from its hands, what will the child do? It will start yelling and crying. Even if you explain you have a much better, bigger toy, will it listen? No! Just give it the new toy and suddenly, it will forget the old one and start enjoying the new one.



In the same way, Existence also tries to give us a big toy. Existence is so vast and wondrous, beyond imagination. Just imagine the kind of toy that Existence has given us -the whole of Itself! Enjoy it to the fullest. Celebrate it and express your gratitude! Your mind will always tell you that the small toy, your little dreams, your ego, is the most important thing and you need it to survive. Just for a few days, try to drop your fantasies and your expectations. For a few days, decide to drop your fears and your protection of the ego.

Just live life in a simple way, enjoying every moment, enjoying the splendor of nature. Enjoy each and every thing that Existence has created. Start observing simple yet wonderful things like the sunrise in the morning, the play of the vibrant colors and hues in the morning sky. Listen to the chirping of the birds as they get ready to enjoy a new dawn. See the flowers blooming in all their glory in the morning sun, ecstatic to open up to the warm rays of the sun.

Just these few moments will show us a whole new dimension of our Being. They will show us what it is to enjoy life without a reason, without running behind or away from something. They will teach us how to relax into the welcoming, embracing arms of Existence.

In these verses, Krishna refers to the body, which has nine gates to the external world: the two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, mouth and the two organs of evacuation.

It may seem strange and absurd that we can just be neither doing nor causing anything to be done. Here, Krishna does not refer to not doing anything out of laziness and indulgence.

Actually, if we can become intensely lazy, we can be in meditation, in liberation! This is not the normal laziness that we all experience where the body is lazy but the mind flips from one thought to another unrelated thought just like a monkey. Here, the laziness is a deep mental laziness where the mind has been stilled. It has stopped all activity but the body moves according to the will of the divine. We are in the midst of intense activity and yet are not doing anything, because the mind has dropped identification with the activity.

The mind separates the doer from the action. It is the mind that defines who the doer is and what the action is. In the conventional sense, when we say lazy, we are referring to the body. The body is lazing around but the mind is completely active. It is carrying on its work of creating and linking unrelated thoughts. When

the mind becomes lazy, instead of the body, we drop the mind also. That is when we stop identifying the action as being separate from ourselves.

Krishna is talking of being so completely involved in something that we no longer are doing anything else, we have become the very action itself. First, we become the witness to the action, only then we can become completely involved in any action. When we start distancing ourselves and become a witness, only then we can be completely involved in the action and then the doer and the action merge into each other. The doer no longer exists separately.

It is not the action that gives us the joy but the conscious experience of the bliss within us through the action that actually gives us happiness and bliss.

A small story:

A dog found a piece of bone and was very happy. It started chewing on the bone but the piece was very dry. It chewed and chewed and after some time, its own gums started bleeding from rubbing against the dry, hard bone. The dog was very happy to finally taste blood.

It licked the bone even more, making more blood ooze from its own mouth.

Little did the dog realize that the blood it was enjoying was its very own! The bone had nothing to do with the taste of the blood!

When we realize through experience or understanding that the joy of life, the bliss in life is completely within us, we will get over our misconception that external pleasures are what give us joy. Then, we can just be without doing anything or causing anything to be done.

When we really understand that we are already all that we can imagine we want to be and much more than that, we have reached the ultimate goal. We will relax into the loving arms of Existence and just flow with it beautifully. Until then it will be a struggle to achieve what we already are.

The enlightened boy sage, Ashtavakra from ancient India, taught the enlightenment science to Janaka, the king of Mithila and Sita's father, saying:

'Righteousness and unrighteousness, pleasure and pain are purely of the mind and are no concern of ours. We are neither the doer nor the reaper of the consequences, so we are always free. We are the one witness of everything and are always completely free. The cause of our bondage is that we see the witness as something other than this.'

Here, Ashtavakra tells us that all the emotions of pleasure, pain, joy, happiness, sadness, sin and righteousness happen in us because we associate ourselves with the actions and their results. It is our mind that plays the game. Our mind and our ego associate us with whatever we do and we attach an emotion to each of it. Our ego says it is we who do what we are doing. Our ego takes charge of us.

So we get involved in our actions and their results. We get emotionally attached to whatever we are doing. This attachment to our actions ends either in happiness or in sadness, pleasure or pain, depending on the outcome of our actions.

Ashtavakra further gives a way to get out of this attachment to our actions. The only way out is by witnessing our actions. We have to see the action and the result as a third person. We have to disassociate ourselves from the action that we performed. We have to let the universe take charge. We have to let ourselves be doers only.

You see, when we leave the ownership to someone else, we are free. The burden is not on us. That is when we can be peaceful. That is when we can be blissful. As long as we think we are the owners, we always have to face the worry that comes with ownership. Why do you want to carry that worry? Let the universe take care and you carry on with your work!

A beautiful story from the life of Buddha:

A disciple of Buddha was going to spread the message of Buddha. The monk was not enlightened though.

Buddha called and told him, 'I have to say this because you are not enlightened yet. You are clear, you speak well, and you can spread the message. You may not be able to sow the seeds but you may be able to attract a few people to come to me. But use this opportunity also for your own growth.'

The monk asked, 'How can I use this opportunity?'

Buddha said, 'There is only one thing that can be done in every opportunity, in every situation and that is watchfulness. You will sometimes find people irritated by you, angry with you because you have hurt their ideologies, their prejudices. Just remain silent and watchful. You may have days when you cannot get food because the people are against you, they will not even give you water. Watch your hunger, watch your thirst. But do not get irritated, do not get annoyed. What you will be teaching people is of less importance than your own watchfulness.'

If you come back to me watchful, I will be immensely joyful. How many people you approached does not matter; how many people you spoke to does not matter. What ultimately matters is whether you yourself have found the solid basis of witnessing. Then all else is insignificant.'

Buddha clearly says to be watchful of all your actions. Only when we are watchful, only when we witness our actions as a third person, we do not associate any kind of emotion either to our action or to the result of that action. By doing so, we are always blissful. Whatever goes on outside does not affect us because we do not associate any emotion to any of it.

Also, what is important is that we practice what we preach. That is what will lead to the true understanding, to imbibing what we understand intellectually. We should live out our principles in life and stand up for what we believe in truly. When we walk the talk we will automatically inspire others to follow. We don't even need to try. We will simply inspire people. The inspiration will be just a by-product while our own transformation will be the joyful end-result.

*Q: Swamiji, I understand the truth of what Krishna says. Giving up sensual pleasures and treating everything as the same, is the answer. But how can I practice this understanding? As a normal human being, I am controlled by my senses. Please guide me.*

You underestimate yourself. No human being is just normal. You have the potential to be supernormal, but then you decide to be subnormal or even abnormal! You are a superman. Please believe that. Instead you believe yourself to be something very inferior.

You rating yourself as normal is your internal evaluation. This is called *mamakāra*, how you perceive yourself. *Ahaṅkāra* is how you project yourself to others. That is what you like others to see you as. You tend to project yourself outside as something bigger than what you feel inside, and inside you always have doubts and feel smaller than what you really are.

Most people, right from childhood seem to be filled with false ideas of self-esteem. You may say, 'No, you are not right, I have a high self-esteem. That is not my problem'. But I still say you have a low self-esteem because any idea that we have of ourselves that is less than us being God is low esteem! We are divine. We are God. If we are living with awareness and truly believe it, we are enlightened.

The only problem is that we refuse to believe that because society has told us that we cannot be God.

Man is not meant to crawl and creep on the earth. He has the capacity to fly to the ultimate. And that is possible only when one becomes an initiate, a disciple. The word 'disciple' means readiness to learn, readiness, receptivity, openness to learning. There is much to learn: the whole infinity. There is much to know from this tremendously beautiful Existence. There is much to love and to live. One should not be satisfied with the ordinary. That's what spirituality is all about: a deep, divine discontent with the ordinary.

People are concerned with the superficial, with the mundane, with the mediocre. To be a seeker of truth is the real beginning of life. Then life takes wings, one starts soaring higher. There are planes upon planes.

We breed our ego and through the ego society manipulates each individual, making him a slave to the powers, to the establishment, to the church, to the state, to the politicians, to the priests. A miserable person cannot rebel; a miserable person clings to whatsoever he has.

He cannot even risk his miseries because he is afraid: 'Who knows? I may get into deeper misery. At least this misery is well-known to me. I am acquainted with it. I have become adjusted to it, I can cope with it. Who knows about the new misery? It is better to remain confined to the old.'

First of all, understand this about your sensory perceptions. All sensory perceptions are illusions. Whatever we hear, see, touch, taste and smell are very transitory inputs. Over 90% of them go directly into our unconscious. We never even get to feel them. The 10% we seem to retain in conscious memory cannot give us a coherent idea of what we have experienced. It is like reading 100 pages of a 1000 page book, and that too a few bits and pieces here and there, and then thinking we are qualified to write a review.

Quantum physics has established that we connect unconnected events to form logical chains. This is what I call 'clutching'. All our sensory inputs, all our thoughts are unconnected. But we link them based on our unconscious memories of the past and start experiencing pain and pleasure. This is what leads to all our suffering. When we 'un-clutch' and disconnect and experience thoughts here and now, our experience will become real and our suffering will dissolve.

Secondly, our senses perceive something and that drives us into action. That action is based on expectations of what we think we will get. The future is always

about pleasurable expectations. When we move towards the future with great expectations, chances are that we will be disappointed. This is the teaching of Krishna right through the Gita. He does not tell us not to act, but He tells us to act without expectations. Be happy with whatever you get. Do not prejudge success and failure of your actions. You will be free and happy.

Thirdly, we can either express or suppress our sensory inputs that lead to desires. By suppressing we enter into a danger zone. Whatever we suppress will burst out later. It will only lead to fantasies and worse still, physical ailments. When we express, the desire grows. We do not have the intelligence to fulfill our desires. We only partially fulfill them, and they grow again like a multi-headed snake. This is what *karma* is.

However, we can learn to transcend the desires by not following what we think our senses convey. When we stay in the present moment and, with awareness, witness our sensory perceptions, we will find that most of them are our own creations, fantasies.

This is why time and again, I tell you all: Enjoy what you have, but renounce what you do not have.

When we are in the present moment we can truly enjoy what we have and fulfill our desires. If we focus on what we are eating without watching television or chatting, we will find that we eat less. We become fulfilled. If we focus single mindedly on the work that we have at this moment instead of being bothered about when we have to finish it, we will finish faster, better and without stress.

This is what Krishna advises us to do. He tells us to master our senses instead of the senses being our master. As of now we are like a dog being led by a leash, without even being aware that we are on a leash. All we need to do is to drop the leash. We need to move beyond the control of our senses.



## Cleansing Ignorance With Knowledge

*5.14 The master does not create activities or make people do or connect with the outcome of the actions.*

*All this is enacted by the material nature.*

*5.15 The Lord, surely, neither accepts anyone's sins nor good deeds.*

*Living beings are confused by the ignorance that covers the knowledge.*

*5.16 Whose ignorance is destroyed by the knowledge?*

*Their knowledge, like the rising sun, throws light on the supreme consciousness.*

*5.17 One whose intelligence, mind and faith are in the Supreme and one who has surrendered to the Supreme,*

*His misunderstandings are cleansed through knowledge and he goes towards liberation.*

A very deep understanding is embedded in this teaching of Krishna. He says, 'I do not create activities or make people do or connect with the fruits of the actions. All this is done by the material nature of humans.'

Krishna is talking not just about the actions of an individual devotee or disciple but at a much larger scale. He is talking about the creation of the universe itself. Understand, nothing in this universe can be created or destroyed. When I say, nothing, I mean NOTHING. Everything that exists has always existed in some form or the other. It will continue to exist in some form or the other. Whether it is an object or a living being, it has always existed. Only the form may vary.

To the intellectual mind, science also says the same thing that matter and energy are inter-convertible and energy can never be destroyed. The beauty of the *Veda* is it says what science has now understood. What is the last line of science was the first line of the *Upaniṣads*.

The Isavasya Upanishad opens with the words, '*īśā vāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*', meaning, 'all that exists arises from energy'. Now after so much scientific research, quantum physics has concluded that matter and energy are one and the same. This is the latest scientific advancement or invention. But this was the first statement in the Isavasya Upanishad, which says everything is energy.

People ask me, 'Who created this universe?' I tell you, the universe itself is the Creator, the created and the creation. If the Creator and the creation were different, it means that the Creator is more intelligent than the creation. But the creation and the Creator are one and the same; they are both divine.

We consider what we see in front of us as the universe and ask who created this universe that has a form. We believe that there has to be some stronger energy that created what we perceive as the universe. We fail to understand that everything, every bit of matter is energy. So when everything is energy, where is the difference between the Creator and the creation? Both Creator and the creation are energy. Both of them are divine. The difference is because of the way we perceive them. We associate a form to the creation.

That is what is meant by *līla*, the divine play. The un-manifest, formless Energy made itself manifest in the creation. The Creator is formless energy and it manifests in the creation that we perceive as having a form. When we realize that the creation is also the same energy that created it, we will see that both are one and the same. We will understand that the universe created itself.

We cannot answer the question 'why' for this in the logical plane. If we get caught in the 'why' in the beginning, we will be stuck with it forever. Instead, explore the 'what'. Try to understand what we really are, what is this universe and when we get the answer to just that question of what we are, who we are, we will see that along with the answer, the question 'why' itself disappears; it simply dissolves.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi's meditation technique was to probe with the question, 'Who am I?' This is also the basis of Zen koans like 'imagine your form before your birth' or 'focus on the sound of one hand clapping'. These questions cannot be answered by the mind since we cannot answer these questions logically. Our mind cannot comprehend these things at all.



God created man in His own mould so that He could experience Divinity. You see, God as God, as the un-manifest, as pure energy cannot see the Divinity outside of Himself. When He is everything, how can He see Himself separate? Everything exists as a part of Him; so He cannot look to see the Divine outside.

It is like this: Can you say how you experience, how you feel your hand from inside your body? Can you describe how you feel your hand from inside? No! On the other hand, can you describe how you feel when you touch your own hand with the other hand? You will have some feeling, is it not? Even though it is your own hand touching the other, you can feel it because from outside, your two hands are separate; you can perceive them as different parts of your body.

In just the same way, God can experience and express Himself through man. Man is a part of God just like both the hands are a part of the same body and can be felt separately. Now, just like one hand in itself cannot understand that the hand it is touching is a part of the same body, similarly, man cannot understand that he is a part of God.

What does it take for the hand to understand that the other hand is actually a part of the bigger whole called the body? It takes the understanding, the perception that the entire body is a single entity with the different parts of the body being integrated in it, connected together.

Similarly, it takes the understanding of our consciousness to see that we are a part of the Whole and that the individual consciousness is an integral and connected part of the collective consciousness. Just like the individual hand in itself can never understand the truth that it is a part of the whole body, the individual ego can never understand the truth that it exists as a part of the Whole. The ego has to dissolve for the truth to be revealed and understood.

It is as if we want to see our own beauty, but how can we do that unless we see our own reflection in a mirror? The mirror in which God sees Himself is man. Can the reflection be a separate entity from what it is reflecting? No!

Man can experience and express the divine in him. The game of life is all about man trying to realize the Divine in him and the Divine trying to express itself through man.

What Krishna teaches here is actually a *sūtra*, a technique. The Western master, Gurdjieff used this technique very often. In his ashram, he would create situations to master this technique of being unperturbed by external incidents. You would

enter a room where a group of people would be sitting and something would be done to make you angry. It would be done so naturally that you would not realize the situation was being set up.

Others would join in to enhance the disturbance and right at the point where you are about to explode, Gurdjieff would shout, 'Remember, remain undisturbed!' The disturbance cannot disappear suddenly because it is a physiological happening. Your hormones have been released into your system; the body has been poisoned.

Even though the anger cannot go away immediately, there is the awareness in you that will dissipate the effect of the anger that remains in the periphery. The center, the core is untouched. You are now aware of these two points, the core and the periphery as two distinct identities co-existing.

An ashram is a spiritual laboratory. Constantly, such situations will arise and you will go through the entire gamut of emotions in response to various situations. But when you go through these with awareness instead of judging the situations or the people and getting disturbed and upset, you will have the tremendous, deep experiential realization of an undisturbed, silent core within you that is unaffected by everything outside of you.

This one glimpse will become the strong support for you and the next time you see that you are being swayed by emotions, you will remember this and such awareness will make you conscious. Only when you are unconscious and ignorant you come under the sway of emotions.

A small story from the life of Buddha:

Buddha was passing by a village. The villagers were against the teachings of Buddha and a few of them insulted him. Buddha just listened and then said, 'I have to reach the next village. Can I go now? If you have finished with whatever you had to say to me, I can move. Or if you have something more to say, while returning, I can stop here. You can come and tell me.'

The villagers were surprised. They could not understand why Buddha did not react the way they had expected him to, in an angry or defensive manner. They said, 'But we have not been saying anything. We have been shouting and insulting you!'

Buddha said, 'You can do that. But if you are looking for any reaction from me, you have come too late. Ten years before, if you had come with these words, I would have reacted. But now I have become a master of myself. You cannot force me to do anything.'

This is what is meant by the term 'being centered'. This is what is meant by the term 'becoming a master'. Then you are no longer a slave to your emotions, or to others. Otherwise, anybody can shake you. They can push and pull you in different directions and you won't be integrated and whole.

Krishna separates morality from spirituality in these verses.

I tell you, heaven and hell are not physical; they are psychological. The concept of heaven and hell is completely in our heads. I always tell people, you don't commit sin and then go to hell. You commit sin because you *are* in hell. When you are not aware, when you do things unconsciously, when you are disturbed and not at peace with yourself, you are in hell. The quality of your inner space is what decides whether you are in heaven or hell.

Somebody asked Buddha, 'If you don't have compassion in your life, what kind of hell do you get?' Buddha replied, 'No punishment can be given to such a man who has no compassion because he is already in hell!'

I tell you, don't live with your conscience; live with consciousness. Live with understanding and awareness and you can never make a mistake. Morality is just skin-deep. The so-called moralists have their rules and regulations for the whole society because they lack the understanding. They are either afraid to face reality or feel guilty about themselves. They go about preaching morality to other people because they lack the intelligence to live life spontaneously.

Understand, there is no such thing as virtue or sin. Everything is energy. What exists is energy. Energy cannot be categorized as good and bad. Emotions such as lust and anger are also energy. These are actually a tremendous energy but we don't know how to handle them, how to respect them and that is where the trouble starts. These so-called base emotions arise due to our own ignorance. When our awareness and understanding transform the base emotions, they become the higher emotions, just as lust gets transformed to love when the understanding happens. Lust becoming love is the ultimate alchemy.

Just live every moment in bliss. Consciously decide that you will face every moment with deep awareness, with deep ecstasy. The very decision will transform your life. We will see life with a completely different attitude. Not only will we feel total and complete, we will radiate the bliss to others as well.

A beautiful story:

Naropa, an enlightened master, was asked by someone when he became enlightened, 'Have you achieved liberation now?'

Naropa replied, 'Yes and no, both. Yes, because I am not in bondage. No, because the liberation was also a reflection of the bondage.'

The liberation existed as long as the concept of bondage existed. Both are just individual concepts that exist as long as the other exists. We experience that liberation only when we were in the clutches of bondage. They are opposites and they will remain as long as the mind, which dwells and survives in the opposites, exists. As long as the mind comes into play, liberation and bondage cannot exist independently. They depend on each other.

For example, when you have a headache, why do you want to get rid of it? Think about it. Why do you yearn for a state in which the headache is absent? That is because you have experienced a state of headache-less-ness before. If you never had a headache, will you ever yearn to be in a state of no headache? How can you? You don't even know, you won't even perceive a state as having or not having a headache because you don't even know such a thing as headache exists. Anything can be felt by the mind only in contrast, in opposites.

That is why Naropa says, 'Yes and no both. Yes, I am not in bondage. No, because the liberation was also a reflection of the bondage.' He says that now he is beyond bondage and liberation both because the mind that perceives these opposites is no longer there to judge these, to categorize these.

We are in ignorance when we think that liberation is some state that we need to achieve. The moment we want to achieve, we want to possess something, we want to hold on to something, it will simply slip from our hands like how sand or water simply slips from our hands the moment we close our fist tightly.

The light of knowledge dispels the ignorance and we realize the state in which we have always been.

Understand, ignorance, just like darkness, has a negative existence.

If I want to take this microphone in front of me out of the room, I can easily remove it, is it not? I can just take it and keep it outside to remove it from the room. But if there is darkness inside the room, can I remove it? Can I physically remove the darkness out of the room? No! I can bring light into the room and the

darkness disappears. But I cannot remove the darkness directly. This is what I mean by something having a negative existence.

Ignorance also can be removed by just shining the light of knowledge on it! Just like the rising sun removes the darkness of the night, the light of knowledge dispels the darkness of ignorance.

What is that ignorance that we need to remove by bringing in the light of knowledge? Just think what we are looking for in life. Whatever we do, what do we want to get out of it? Simply put, we want to be happy, right? We want to feel happy in whatever we do.

But the strange truth is, we are already pure bliss. Please understand, I am not saying we have achieved bliss. I am saying we *are* bliss. Each one of us is pure bliss. The problem is we are not ready to accept this ultimate truth and relax, because the moment we accept this, we no longer have a separate personality; the ego has no basis to exist. What identity can it have if you are already what you ultimately want to be? There exists no more desire then; there exists no more fear. Without greed and fear, how can the ego exist and drive you?

It is our ego that makes us feel incomplete. The ego needs us to be a solid entity for it to exist. The mind always yearns to be occupied, to be engaged in doing something, in running behind something. Only then can it survive.

When we are pure bliss, we have nothing to run after because we are complete unto ourselves. But in this zone, we are nothing. We have no identity because we have merged into Existence, the ultimate and only reality. This is too much for the ego to handle. The mind therefore plays a very cunning and subtle game to keep us engaged in some pursuit, material or spiritual.

We may not accept this truth but if we look deeply, we can see clearly that it is us who choose to stay in suffering. We think that we want bliss and that we want to drop our ego. But deep down, we choose to stay with our ego.

Krishna gives us another technique to liberate ourselves.

He says surrender leads to liberation, and happens when one's intelligence is focused on Him.

When we believe there is a life force that is conducting this universe and is taking care of us, we relax. When we relax and are not stressed or worried, we can live and function at our optimum potential. We can express our creativity and live

spontaneously. We experience a great freedom and liberation. This is surrender. This is true knowledge also. This is the knowledge that cannot be taught or picked up. The master can simply transmit it when our being is ready to receive it.

All we need is the faith to allow the supreme intelligence to guide us, to surrender our mind that oscillates between the extremes. The knowledge removes the ignorance and misunderstanding. All our problems are due to lack of knowledge, due to ignorance. Whether it is fear or greed or worry or anger, all these emotions are able to control us because we are not aware. We allow them to unconsciously control us.

When we bring a deep awareness into anything, the solution simply stands out. When we go deeply into any emotion with deep awareness, we can flower out of it. This is true knowledge.

I tell you, at the times of real testing, of extreme doubt, doubt your ego. Never doubt the master. The master is the only truth you can cling to when all else gives way. The master is the only one who can guide you when everything seems to be confusing. At the start of the war Arjuna is utterly confused but has the intelligence to listen to Krishna in that time of extreme doubt.

Surrender can happen at different levels. Bodhidharma said,

*Buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi  
dhammam śaraṇam gacchāmi  
saṅgam śaraṇam gacchāmi*

This means,

I surrender to Buddha's form  
I surrender to Buddha's teachings  
I surrender to Buddha's mission

People have misunderstood this to mean that the master, his teachings and the mission are three different entities. No! The master lives in all three, the body, his teachings and mission. The master has no vested interests, no desires to fulfill in life. Masters come out of sheer compassion for the whole of mankind, to dispel the ignorance of seekers, to show them the light. Only a third of the master's energy is in the physical body. The other third is in the teachings and another third is in the mission.

Nithyananda is *Nitya-Dhyāna-Ānanda* all in one. *Nitya*, the master in the body as Nithyananda, *Dhyāna*, my teaching and blessing of meditation, and *Ānanda*, my mission of bringing forth the fountain of bliss that is lying latent in you. All the three together constitute the energy called *nityānanda*.

When you surrender to the master, you surrender to his mission and to his teachings as well. When you surrender at the physical level, you surrender your physical self, your comforts to the master, to imbibe and spread his teachings and mission.

For example, when you are involved completely in the work of the mission, you sacrifice your comforts, your sleep, and your desires in order to do that work. Actually, I cannot call it sacrifice because you will feel from your very being that this is the best thing you can do. You will feel that it is the best use of your time and energy at the moment, rather than doing anything else. Automatically, your comforts take a lower priority and your laziness just vanishes. Everything else becomes a lower priority. The work of the mission is of supreme priority.

And I tell you, when you take up the responsibility of the mission, you will realize that what seemed to you as a load, as too much responsibility, is actually a blissful experience. How can the mission of the master give anything other than pure bliss? The moment you surrender to the master and his mission and you stand up to take up the responsibility, you will find that the divine energy simply flows through you and you just flow effortlessly and express yourself most beautifully.

All you need to do is to be stable and available, and the divine energy will make you able!

On the mental level, surrender means surrendering your intellect to serve the master and the mission. For example, you may be knowledgeable and interested in a particular subject but you sacrifice that interest for the sake of the mission's priorities and needs. You surrender your mental faculties, mental pursuits to serve the mission according to the needs of the mission. You turn into liquid, flowing into the shapes and moulds created by the master.

The master knows best the ideal way in which each of us can grow. He creates the moulds for each of us according to our needs and abilities. All we need to do is trust Him for this, drop our solid ego and become fluid so we can fill in the spaces He creates for us. Then, we can see we are a unique part of this wonderful Existence.

The third level is the being-level surrender. When our very being surrenders to the master, we have reached. At this level our being clearly recognizes the call of the master. We become a part of the master. We just merge with Existence that the master is an embodiment of. We no longer carry any separate identity. The process of transformation has converted water, the liquid, into formless steam. Like steam, we explode in all directions. No limitations exist because all boundaries and limitations exist only in the mind.

We now transcend the mind and express our potential, which is truly limitless. This is the ultimate state in which a master lives every moment and to which He tirelessly and compassionately pushes us in different ways so that we can also experience and be in the same state of eternal bliss.

**Q: Swamiji, of all the qualities that humans possess and express, what would be the greatest virtue, the one that would be close to divinity?**

Beautiful!

Compassion is that quality which defines divinity. It is not your dictionary meaning of compassion. An enlightened master's compassion extends to all the beings in this universe, not directed at any one, not caused by any particular thing. It is as I mentioned earlier, the causeless auspiciousness of Shiva.

Within human emotions, love is the only virtue, the only spirituality, the only morality. If love is missing then one can have all the morality and still one will be dead. Still deep down one will be immoral. Without love one can have all the virtues but they will be superficial. They will be just like a painted smile, a mask, maybe good to become respectable, but God cannot be deceived in such superficial ways. In fact, He cannot be deceived in any way. He looks at the very center of your being, not at your circumference. He looks not at what you do but at what you are.

Love transforms your being and then your acts are transformed automatically. A loving person cannot be immoral. He cannot hurt anybody. He cannot cheat, and he cannot lie. It is impossible for him to be cruel. Compassion will be simply his way of life.

The priests and the politicians are not interested in love; they are interested in imposing rules and regulations upon us. They don't want real human beings; they want phony, controlled people. Real people are dangerous to the establishment.



There are two sources of knowing. One is logic, the other is love. Through logic we arrive at knowledge; through love we arrive at wisdom. Knowledge only gives us superficial information. Wisdom gives us a deep, profound insight into things. Knowledge is only accumulation. One can accumulate as much as one wants. The human brain is a computer and it can contain all the libraries of the world. But still, we remain the same within us. It is like a donkey carrying the load of many scriptures. We might know much but we don't know our own selves. All our knowledge is borrowed knowledge, not an experience.

Love gives us true knowledge. It makes our life a scripture. It awakens us to the beauty of Existence, to the tremendous grace of life and all that it contains. It awakens us to the presence of God. Logic cannot do it and those who depend on knowledge remain poor.

Depend on love and all the riches of the world are yours. Depend on love and the kingdom of God is yours. That is exactly the meaning of love: surrendering the ego, dropping it, becoming egoless. And whenever we are egoless, love starts flowing through us. We can call that love God or light or bliss or wisdom.

Life can either be prose or it can be poetry. Science makes it prose and spirituality transforms it into poetry. Love can be expressed only in poetry, never in prose.

To live life as prose is to live in a mundane way, and to live life as poetry is to live in a sacred way.

All these religions are different ways of approaching life not through logic, but through love, of looking at Existence not with fear, but with wonder. And it is only the eyes that are full of wonder and awe that are capable of knowing the truth.

We are dewdrops, dropping into the ocean. Fear arises; one hesitates because one can see that one is going to disappear. But what is death on one side is life, eternal life, on another. The dewdrop disappears as a dewdrop but reappears as the ocean itself. It is worth it.

One can forget all about God if one can only remember to be in love and be blissful. Then God is *bound* to happen. God is inevitable.

Destination means slavery. Destination means that we are predetermined. Love has no destination. It is a journey. It is not work; it is not duty. It is never a means to anything else; it is the very end itself.

The wind has no fixed form. It constantly changes; it is never the same for two consecutive moments. So is the case with love. And we will try to give it a certain form and shape. We are trying to do the impossible. When we fail, frustration is the result. Love never frustrates anybody. It is our expectations, our impossible expectations of love, which creates frustration.

Never try to give a form and a shape to your love. Allow it to remain shapeless, formless; because it is not a thing, it is an experience. It cannot be defined, and it is not gross; it is very subtle, the subtlest experience of life.

The wind is always in a state of let-go. If Existence says, 'Come along, I am going to the north', it moves. It has no resistance, it doesn't know 'no'. It is always saying 'yes'. It does not ask why, it does not insist on knowing the reason. It does not say, 'I have other plans. I want to go to the south, not to the north.' The wind has no plans, no purposes for the future. It is available to Existence. It is so totally available that in the very total availability it knows the ultimate taste of liberation.

So is the case with love. It is a state of liberation. It is the state of surrender. It allows the whole of Existence to do whatsoever it wants to do with you, to take you wherever it wants to. It has no idea of how things should be. It moves moment-to-moment, with no idea, no prejudice, with no concepts of its own.



## The Dog and the Dog-Eater

*5.18 One who is full of knowledge and compassion sees equally*

*The learned brahmana, the cow, the elephant, the dog and the dog-eater.*

*5.19 In this life, surely, those whose minds are situated in equanimity have conquered birth and death.*

*They are flawless like the Supreme and therefore, are situated in the Supreme.*

*5.20 One who does not rejoice at achieving something he likes nor gets agitated on getting something he does not like,*

*Who is of steady intelligence, who is not deluded, one who knows the Supreme, is situated in the Supreme.*

*5.21 One who is not attached to the outer world sense pleasures, who enjoys in the Self, in that happiness,*

*He is self-connected and engaged in the Supreme and enjoys unlimited happiness.*

Krishna succinctly explains the neutrality and equanimity of Existence. Existence has no favorites. All comparative and hierarchical definitions are manmade.

Krishna says there is no difference between a human and an animal, and that there is no difference between those we consider to be saints and those we consider to be sinners. A learned scholar, the priest and the *brāhmana* should be seen as equal to an animal or a person who eats dogs.

Even more dramatically, He says that the dog and the eater of the dog are the same.

This is what Shankara means when he sings the six verses of his Ātma Śatakam. 'I am not the enjoyer. I am not the enjoyed. I am not the enjoying. I am beyond all that; I am just the embodiment of Shiva.'

This is one of the most beautiful messages from Shankara who is arguably the greatest philosopher ever to have been born on this planet. 'I am not the doer, I am not the deed, I am not the doing,' he says. 'I am just the witness, beyond all these.'

When we go beyond all three, not being the subject, object and verb, all connotations disappear. The eater and the eaten merge. All meanings disappear. We reach the source. There are no thoughts and there is no mind. There is just you, your being. That is the true you, the Supreme.

Animals and plants do not differentiate and discriminate. Except in man-made fables, animals do not think of one animal as superior to others or another as inferior to others. The lion is a king only to us, not to other animals. There are many animals that are not afraid of the lion.

A king was depressed with all his responsibilities and went to Buddha seeking advice. Buddha sent him with a disciple into the nearby garden and told him to look at the cactus plant and the rose bush that were growing next to each other.

The king came back puzzled. He asked what was there to see. 'I saw the tree and bush, that's all. What else?'

Buddha said, 'Neither is the cactus plant jealous of the rose bush whose flowers every one admires, nor is the rose bush complaining that people pluck all its flowers while the cactus plant is left unharmed. Each of them is centered in their own uniqueness. There is no comparison. There is no envy. There is no unhappiness.

The king realized how foolish he was for complaining about his responsibilities. He thanked Buddha and left in peace.

Existence continuously showers bliss upon each of us. Only we are not open to receive it. Existence sees everyone as equal. It does not discriminate. Everyone is a part of the same Existence.

Similarly, masters see the whole world as one with their own selves. That is why they can only show compassion to anyone and everyone.

External appearances are ephemeral. When we see the eternal, blissful being as the core of each and every one of us, we will realize the inherent divine nature of each of us. This knowledge, gained through the experience of the Self, results automatically in deep compassion towards the whole of Existence.

Understand that the classifications of lower species and higher species, good and bad are all made by society, by our minds, our egos. Existence itself does not make any distinction in the name of high and low. Only the human beings think that they are an advanced species and that they are more intelligent than the rest of Nature. We think our intellect is greater than the intelligence of Existence!

A small story:

One night, a thief knocked on the door of a monastery located in the middle of a forest. The master opened the door and allowed the man to spend the night in the monastery.

The next morning, the thief thanked his host and asked for his permission to leave. He also confessed to the master that he was a thief and had burgled the palace the previous night. The master was aghast.

He started weeping loudly, 'What a great sin I have committed by allowing a thief to spend a night in my monastery! I gave him food too. What can I do to make up for my sin?'

At that time, he heard a voice from the sky, weeping even louder than him, 'You are upset and weeping because you have looked after him for one night. What about me? I have been looking after him everyday for all these years!'

The master had actually become egoistic. He started feeling holier than others because of which he looked down upon the thief as a less holy person. God never differentiates between a sinner and a saint. These are all societal. In a forest, who is a sinner and who is a saint?

Every atom on earth is divine. When we take things for granted, when we take life for granted, we do not realize this and create boundaries for ourselves. When we just realize that this very life is a divine gift to us, our attitude changes from taking things for granted to one of gratitude to Existence for everything!

Have you worked hard to earn this life? With every breath that you take every moment, the life energy flows into you and keeps you alive. Can you say you created the life energy that sustains you? We take for granted the life energy that goes in through our breath. We take for granted the mechanism and energy that converts bread into blood. Anything that we have in life we take for granted. The mind continuously runs behind 'more and more'.

If we make two lists: one list of what we have, what Existence has showered upon us and a second list of what we *really* want to have to feel happier, we will quickly realize how much longer the first list is. Have we ever strongly considered what our life would be like if we did not have even a small limb that we take so much for granted? Can you imagine the limitations we would have without a toe or thumb, not to speak of our eyes or ears?

We take so much for granted. We assume that what we have been given is our rightful due and so we only crave for more. We are here as gifts of Nature. Instead of being grateful to Existence for what we have been showered with, we complain about what we do not have.

Remember that when Existence, when God does not grant us what we seek, He is doing it out of deep compassion and wisdom. We think God has the power to give us what we ask for. Of course, He has. But we don't think he also has the wisdom to decide what we should be given and when!

He does not grant many of our prayers because, in His compassion and wisdom, He knows what we need. He knows that far better than us. That is why it is said to be careful about what you wish for, because you may get it! It is true. We have no wisdom when it comes to asking. We ask because we see someone else enjoying that same thing. We do not even know if that person is really enjoying it; we just assume that he or she is. That creates envy and desire in us and we too seek the same. For all you know, that person may be suffering with whatever you are coveting!

The Divine is far wiser. The Divine knows what we really need. It knows that what we want is all borrowed. There is a huge difference between what we want and what we need. We do not realize the difference. The Divine does.

For the next couple of days, just try living with the attitude of gratitude, with love for everyone and everything around you, with deep awareness. Automatically, you will see that you can experience each and every person and thing as a unique

creation of Existence, as a reflection of the Divine. Just decide consciously that you will respond with love for the next couple of days, whatever may be the situation. Just for two days decide not to react the way you have been reacting all these years; instead, respond with love.

Just the very attitude change will bring tremendous peace and relaxation into you.

Krishna says, when you look every single thing without differentiation, without favoritism, without attachment, then you are a true renunciate, a true *sanyāsi*, a true monk.

Can you look at death and birth in the same manner? We celebrate birth, we condole death. Why?

Both are passages. Neither is a beginning nor an end. The cycle of life is continuous. We move seamlessly from birth through living into death and again into birth. It is just that, in this life, we do not remember what happened in the period between our death in our previous birth and our birth this time. That loss of memory is for our own safety.

We are perturbed by that loss of knowledge, by the loss of memory. What we do not know frightens us. If we understand that death is no different from birth and that life after death may be no different from our current life, there will be no fear. This can happen when we have the experience of death while we are still alive. This is what we teach in our programs.

An important thing: How we look at death reflects a lot about how we look at life. I can say, our perception of death changes our way of life.

Death is feared by most of us because it is considered a discontinuity. When we realize that death is just a continuation in some other form, we will not fear death. Then the joy of birth and the sadness at death will both be seen as the same.

A small story about Socrates:

The Greek society killed Socrates by forcing him to drink the poisonous juice of the hemlock herb. Just before he drank the poison, one of his disciples asked him, 'Master, are you not afraid of dying? You appear to be so calm.'

Socrates replied, 'Why should I be afraid? I know that only two things can happen after death. Either I will continue to exist in some other form or name, or I will cease to exist after death. If I continue to exist in some other form,

there is nothing to worry about. If I cease to exist, nothing remains to worry!  
So either way, there is nothing to fear!’

Our idea of birth and death is very direct evidence, a clear mirror of how we look at various situations in life. That is why understanding about birth and death is actually fundamental to leading a life of realization.

Ashtavakra, the boy sage from India says, ‘Seeing this world as pure illusion, and devoid of any interest in it, how should the strong-minded person feel fear, even at the approach of death? Equal in pain and in pleasure, equal in hope and in disappointment, equal in life and in death, and complete as you are, you can find peace.’

Understand, one who knows that what he sees is illusion, just a play of mind, and if he is completely detached from this illusion, he will not fear death. As long as we hold on to this illusion created by the mind that we call reality, we have a feeling of losing it when we think of death. When we see pain and pleasure as the same and are not affected by either of them, we will be free from the fear of death. Because then we realize that nothing is taken away from us when death comes. There is no disappointment when death comes to us.

Enlightened masters’ experience about death teaches us a lot. Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi got his enlightenment through a conscious experience of death.

When Bhagavan was a young boy, one day he was just lying on his bed in his uncle’s house in Madurai in India. Suddenly he got the feeling that he was going to die! He felt that death was coming upon him.

He had two choices: to resist the feeling or to accept it and go through it. He chose the second, to accept death as it is and go through it. He became enlightened after he experienced the process of death.

Usually people resist, so they pass into a coma and leave the body in a state of unconsciousness. Ninety nine percent of us leave the body in a state of unconsciousness.

In our second level program, the Nithyananda Spurana Program (NSP) now called Life Bliss Program Level 2 or LBP 2, we go into the complete understanding of death, what happens exactly when we die. We teach you to experience the process of death and to understand how and what happens, so that there is no mystery and therefore there is no fear.

Though we know from the moment of our birth that our life will culminate in death, we never try to visualize it. We never try to welcome it. At least once if we



go through death, if we go through our fear with deep consciousness, we will lose our fear for death automatically.

Bhagavan was courageous enough to choose the second path. He co-operated with the feeling. He allowed death to happen. He decided to see what would happen during death. He saw clearly one by one, the parts of his body dying. Slowly, his whole body was dead. He saw his body turn into ashes.

Suddenly, he realized that something remained even after that; something that cannot be destroyed. At that moment, it hit him that he was pure consciousness, beyond the body and mind! He was simply a witness to the whole thing!

That knowledge was tremendous and it never left him. When he came back into his body, he was Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi, an enlightened master!

When we conquer the fear of death, we conquer death itself, because death is just one more imagination!

When we get over the cycle of greed and fear, we can be in equanimity in all situations in life; then we are situated in the supreme consciousness. It is then we have touched our core, our real Being.

Krishna goes on to explain the characteristics of one who is supreme.

He says that one who is of steady intelligence, one who does not get caught in the play of opposing emotions like pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, is truly not deluded and is established in the truth, and in the Supreme. He is Supreme himself.

What do we need to know to get out of the whirlpool of emotions?

If we look deeply, we will see that all our emotional blocks like fear, greed or worry, at the root, are born of an expectation for a certain thing to happen in a certain way; a certain situation to present itself in a certain way. We always have a fantasy about how things should happen and how they should be.

We live in a virtual world and when there is a gap between reality and imagination, the trouble starts. The greater the gap, the more tension, disappointment and frustration we experience. We start to like or dislike something based on this gap. We create all negative emotions and forget about our innate blissful nature because we constantly fantasize about how things should be. The likes and dislikes are a product of the mind, not of the being. The being is just bliss and not related to any external incident.

Beautifully, Krishna says, 'An object of enjoyment that comes of itself is neither painful nor pleasurable for someone who has eliminated attachment, and who is free from the dualism of self and the other and therefore, from desire.'

This is actually a *sūtra*, a technique, that Krishna gives. If we put our attention neither on pleasure nor on pain, but between the two, we actually go beyond both and we can transcend the play of the mind. What do we normally do? If we are in pain, we try to run away from it. If we are in pleasure, we try to cling onto it. Understand that both pleasure and pain are of the mind. They are based on our *saṁskāras* - engraved memories from our past. They are not of the being. Instead of trying to hold onto pleasure or running away from pain, just be with it, just witness it. The nature of the mind is to move to the opposites. By its very nature, the mind will move from one extreme to the other. Using this technique, we can transcend this nature of the mind.

For example, if we have a headache, don't try to resist it. Just witness it. Accept it. As the tree is there, as the night is there, so also the headache is there. On the other hand, if we are very happy, don't try to cling onto it. Whether it is happiness or pain, just be a witness to it. It is like standing in front of the sun in the morning. The sun just rises and we just watch it. The sun will set in the evening, we watch that also, with no attachment to the sun rising or setting.

In fact, this is the whole principle behind the 'middle path' of Buddha. Buddha endorses neither indulging in pleasure nor abstaining from it. Be involved but be aware. When we are aware, we can never be unconsciously pulled into it. Then desire cannot overcome us. We are always the master. Whenever we want, we can get out of it.

Only when we are not aware can the sense pleasures control us. When we are not aware, not conscious, then we get caught in the cycle of guilt and desires because after the desire gets fulfilled, we go through guilt for having succumbed to the desire. But we did not live the desire fully with awareness, so we can't get out of it either. The next time, again, the desire happens and again we go through it incompletely and then feel guilty. The only way to get out of this vicious cycle of desire and guilt is to go through the desire with awareness.

Normally we go through only two modes with all our desires. We either suppress or express. Because of past experience and *saṁskāra*, we think the experience would be painful, and so we suppress the desire. Sometimes we may suppress a desire even if the experience may seem like it won't be painful. This is because of negative associations imposed on us by society. If it is seen to be pleasurable, we go into the experience willingly and we express our desire.

Suppression does not lead to elimination of that desire. It temporarily blocks access, but that desire will rise with renewed vigor again. Expression also does not mean fulfillment. Again and again the desire will rise even after repeated expression because we rarely experience anything with awareness.

In expression of a desire, we have the choice to experience with awareness. Once we experience a desire with full awareness, whether related to food, sex or material desires, we will find that the desire is fulfilled and we will not be bothered by it anymore. We will transcend the desire. It is actually that simple.

This is what I term *karma*. *Karma* is nothing but unfulfilled desire that makes us repeat the same experience again and again, mindlessly, simply because we do not have the intelligence to enter into that experience with complete awareness. Once we experience the situation with awareness, in that present moment, we will experience what Shankara experienced. We will not be the doer, the deed or the doing. We will transcend all three. We will transcend our *karma*. We will be supreme.

Krishna advises us to turn inwards. Move away from your senses, move into your Source, He says.

By nature, by our very being we are tuned inwards. By conditioning, by the absorption of experiences of the outer world, we lose the capability to turn inwards. We will see that most children are blissful, just curious and happy to be what they are. They are happy to do what they do. They are in bliss.

Then unfortunately, they grow up to be adults! They lose that bliss. They lose that natural response to turn inwards. Society and adults teach them to trust their senses. They tell them that what they see, hear, touch, smell and taste are the truthful reality. Over time, children, like adults who they see, become slaves to their senses. They fall into the trap of sensual pleasures; they become enslaved to what they imagine and fantasize to be pleasures. Once in, it is difficult to get out.

One who indulges in sense pleasures is just caught in the push and pull of desires and guilt. He is just under hormonal torture. Our mind is like a monkey. It flirts with one desire moving to the next as soon as the previous one is fulfilled. Till that desire is fulfilled, it will make it look like the most important thing, and after it is fulfilled, it will seem the most insignificant. Then the new desire will appear all-important. This is how we get caught in the rat race and the web of sense pleasures.

Again and again, we look outside for solutions that keep us happy. Everything that happens around us and outside us gives us sense pleasures. If we see our list of desires, most of them are not even ours. They are borrowed from others. We will be totally happy with our car until our neighbor gets a new car. We will be totally happy with our job until our colleague gets promoted to a higher post.

We constantly update our list of desires by looking at what is going on outside, and we start believing that fulfilling these desires will give us what we define as happiness or pleasure. Whatever happens outside, it completely controls our level of satisfaction and our state of happiness. So to fulfill these desires, we keep on running the rat race, not knowing what exactly *we* want.

In our second level meditation program, LBP 2 or Nithyananda Spurana Program, I make people write down their desires. Some people write just a few desires and close their books. I tell them, 'If you have only so many desires, then you must be enlightened!' You should see how people fill pages with their list of desires! After writing, they do a deep meditation, and when they are asked to remember their desires, they are able to remember only a handful.

They wrote probably fifty desires but after the meditation they are able to remember only a few of them, less than ten. Why is it like that?

It is because what they remember are their true desires. These are the desires that they truly want. The rest of the forty desires are borrowed desires. These borrowed desires are the play of the mind.

When we look for fulfillment outside, we are looking for solutions outside. However, the real solution lies inside. We need to be able to connect to our true self and not be driven by the mind. The true source of pleasure is not outside us. The true source of pleasure is not because of things outside us. We should realize that we are blissful by nature. Our being is always blissful. Our core is always blissful.

So the correct place to look for pleasure is not outside. It is very much inside us. If we realize this, we will always be centered in ourselves. We will not be bothered by what goes on outside because we know exactly that we are inherently blissful. He who is free from being and non-being, who is contented, desire-less, and wise, even if in the eyes of the world he does act, does nothing.

We must have seen, on the surface, to the external world, a mad man with tremendous laziness will look very similar to a mystic in deep bliss. On the surface, to the outer world, they may seem very similar but inside, they are the complete opposites.

A madman is lazy and is lying around. There are so many things that are going on in his mind. However, a mystic is sitting completely relaxed because he is centered in his being with no mind. We might find the mystic sitting and doing nothing. To us he may seem the same as a madman. But the mind of the mystic is not doing anything. He is complete unto himself.

When we are situated in the core of our being, when we are one with the Self, we are not shaken by the emotions that happen on the periphery. It is like a rock that is standing in the ocean. The waves of the emotions are continuously lashing against the rock but the rock still stands unperturbed.

The happiness arises from our very being, from our Self. It is unlimited because it cannot be stopped by any external agent. The *ānanda spurana* (fountain of bliss) is eternal (*nitya*).

This is what we teach in our first level program, Ananda Spurana Program ASP, also called Life Bliss Program, LBP - level 1. We teach how to re-experience the bliss that you constantly felt when you were a child; the bliss that you lost as you grew up, as you became educated.

With societal conditioning, we block the energy centers in our body-mind system that connects us to the Existential energy. As long as these centers are fully open and unblocked, we are in constant contact with our primary source of energy. We are at ease, we are in comfort, and we are in bliss.

When these centers get blocked through conditioning, with the growth of negativities in us, with accumulation of *samskāras* in us, we lose that bliss, that comfort, and that ease. We become dis-eased.

These energy blocks are the root cause of all our illnesses, be they of the mind or body. Through the use of meditation techniques, we teach how to unblock and energize these energy centers called *cakras*, so that we can experience that bliss again. That is why this program is called *Ānanda Spurana*; *Ānanda* is bliss, *Spurana* is to gush. The bliss we blocked out starts gushing again. Somewhere, we stopped the bliss flow. We teach how to stop the stopping and let bliss flow within you again.

**Q: Swamiji, how can we see everything equally, without differentiation? We ourselves are not created equally; we are all different and diverse. How then is it possible to see every one else the same way as Krishna suggests?**

This is a wonderful question.

We are created equally. The Divine does not discriminate or differentiate. Our basic structure is the same. We all have a mind, body and spirit system, to make us functional. However, we carry a mindset from our previous birth, a tinge, an intent, a subtle essence that is called *vāsana*, which makes us different.

It is as if we are all spherical balls in space. What is inside us is the same as what is outside in the space; both are exactly the same energy. The skin of the ball is our body. At death the skin dissolves. It is like the rubber covering of a rubber ball with air inside or the rubber covering of a balloon filled with air suddenly disappearing. What happens then? The air inside merges with the air outside, is it not?

That is what happens at death too. We merge with the outer energy, after giving up this body. Only difference is this: During our life we have accumulated experiences and memories and have therefore formed a mindset, *vāsana*. This *vāsana* can be imagined as each ball having a different-colored air inside it: one pink, one blue, one green and so on. So when the rubber disappears, the air inside stays separate from the air outside, in its same tinge. Though it is the same energy it has a tinge that separates.

The different colored air spaces now have to find other balls, new balls, which have similar characteristics with their color to accommodate them. The spirit, which is tinged with this *vāsana* has to find bodies suitable for that *vāsana*. It looks for the right parents, right environment, right time and right space to be reborn so that its carryover *vāsana* can be accommodated and fulfilled.

We are created equally, but with some differences based on our past experiences and attitudes, which define our bodies, mind and other conditions in this lifetime. Remember though, essentially we are all the same energy and therefore we are the same. It is this equality that we need to be aware of and seek. Though we may start unequally because of our mindset, we can all reach the same equal state. That is the state of our true nature.

This is what Krishna refers to when He talks about equanimity. We call it *samādṛṣṭi*, equanimity of perception, to see everyone and everything equally without discrimination and differentiation. We are all creatures of the same Existence, children of the same energy. Once we understand that commonality, there is no difficulty in practicing equanimity.



## Path To Self Realization

*5.22 The intelligent person surely does not enjoy the sense pleasures, enjoyments*

*Which are sources of misery and which are subject to beginning and end.*

*5.23 Before leaving this present body, if one is able to tolerate the urges of material senses and check the force of desire and anger,*

*He is well-situated and he is happy in this world.*

*5.24 One who is happy from within, active within as well as illumined within, surely, is a yogi (united in mind, body and spirit)*

*And he is liberated in the Supreme, is Self-realized and attains the Supreme.*

*5.25 The holy men whose sins have been destroyed are working for the welfare of other beings,*

*Those who are self-restrained and have cleared all their doubts and dualities attain the eternal happiness of God, Nitya Ānanda (eternal bliss), of Divine.*

*5.26 They who are free from lust and anger, who have subdued the mind and senses,*

*And who have known the Self, easily attain liberation.*

Krishna says that sense pleasures are bounded; they do not last forever. They are just temporary.

Generally, we are controlled by what happens outside us. The state of happiness and sadness in us happens due to various things that are going on around us. Happiness is an emotion that is created by something outside of us. It could be due to a pleasant situation, or through a person whom we like, some action that pleases us and so on.

When we experience happiness due to some event outside us, be very sure, sadness is around the corner. When we experience the joy in us because of an external source, we will experience sadness once that external source is taken away from us.

We always attach our happiness to something that is external to us. We say we are happy because of this event or because of that person. If these things are taken away from us, we are left with sadness. It is like a pendulum swaying from one extreme of happiness to the other extreme of sadness.

In our programs, we ask participants to imagine a state of great happiness and stay with it for a while. After that experience, we ask them to describe what they went through. Invariably it was happiness related to a person or an event, that was related to an external source and the happiness was brought about by the sense perception.

Now when we ask them to remove that event or person from their imagination, there is deep sorrow. They feel they have lost something. They will grieve. That is how temporary happiness or sorrow is for all of us, how pain or pleasure is for all of us.

The event and the person do not cause happiness and sorrow. It is caused by our perception, by our sense perception and by the judgment based on sense perception. That is why the same event that may be joyful to one is sorrow filled for another, and would leave a third one undisturbed. It is our attachment to that person or event and our judgment based on our conditioning that creates the sorrow or happiness. The incident by itself is neutral.

There is a beginning and an end to these states of sorrow and happiness. But bliss is something that continuously happens in us for no reason. Bliss does not depend on external sources. It is inside us. It is internal. Once we are centered in us, we are always in bliss. When we are constantly experiencing the inner joy or bliss, whatever happens outside us does not increase or reduce the amount of happiness we experience.



Happiness or sadness happens because of our sense pleasures which are again a result of our mind and ego. Our ego, our false association of ourselves with various emotions is actually the cause of our misery. At the core of our beings is pure bliss. But we are functioning at our periphery and are not able to see this core.

The ego is what is really meant by *māyā* or illusion. *Yā mā iti māyā*: that which does not exist but which troubles as if it exists is *māyā*. We don't see reality as it is because we are all the time looking at life through glasses tinted with our biased perceptions, through our limited view of life.

When we start watching these sources with awareness, we break the chords of attachment of our state of joy with these external sources and desires. When we are aware of what we really want, this dependency on sense pleasures breaks. When we are centered in ourselves, we start taking things as and when they come.

I am not saying you should not enjoy the joy that you get from external sources or fulfillment of our desires. No. All I saying is, be aware of it when it happens, that's all. Do not attach your internal state of joy to these sense pleasures. If they happen, let them happen. Let them not dictate your state of happiness.

Krishna gives us now a beautiful technique to reach that ultimate Krishna consciousness, to reach the beautiful space of bliss.

He is saying exactly what I said earlier. If we can at least once settle inside, if at least once we settle inside our being when we are attacked by this emotion of desire and anger, without moving our body, without cooperating, without being taken away by that emotion, we are well-situated. This means that we achieved what has to be achieved; we are blissful in this world.

People ask me again and again, '*Swamiji*, what is the purpose of this body and mind?'

The purpose of body and mind is only one thing: to achieve, to learn how to experience joy without body and mind.

If we can learn to have happiness, bliss, without the body and mind, we have achieved the purpose of the body and mind; over! After that, we can throw away the body and mind; we can live without the body and mind.

The person who is able to live without the body and mind is called a *jīvan mukta* - a person living enlightenment. Even if the body and mind is with him, he will not be touched by it. He has no use for it. If we don't have any use, any need for it,

will you go to Los Angeles? No. Unless you have some reason, you will not go there.

In the same way, unless you have some reason, you will not assume this body. If you had a single glimpse of bliss without this body and mind, the bliss that is beyond this body and mind, you will never be disturbed by this body and mind. Even if it is there, it will be following you; you will not be following it.

It is like this: If you don't know how to put the brakes on when you are driving the car, it means you are not driving the car, the car is driving you! Without reading the owner's manual and learning to drive, if you sit in the car, you will only be doing this mistake. Without the manual, if you straightaway drive the car, you will be doing these types of mistakes. Only when you know how to start or to stop or apply the brakes properly, you are driving the car. Otherwise, the car is driving you.

So read the owner's manual before getting into the vehicle. The Bhagavad Gita is the owner's manual for your body and mind. Read the owner's manual before getting into the body and mind so that you will be able to stop when you want to stop. You will not get into the accident of repeating the life and death cycle.

Here Krishna says: The man who is not moved, who can tolerate the urges of material senses, check the force of desire and anger, is well-situated and he is happy in this world. He knows where he is. He knows his place. If you don't know your place, it is very difficult.

In this world, many of us don't know our place. That is why we feel we are uprooted. We don't feel we belong to this life. We don't feel we are at home because we don't know our place.

A small story:

In a dark theater, during the intermission, one man went out, came back with popcorn and Coca-Cola. He came near a woman and asked, 'Did I step on your foot a few minutes ago?' She said, 'Yes. As a matter of fact, you did.'

The man said, 'Thank you. Then, this is my row!'

You don't know your row! You don't know your place. You have to identify your place only through these sources. You don't know where you are situated. Only a person who has gone beyond greed and fear can relax into his being. He will know what his place is in this planet earth.

If we don't fuel our being with fear and greed, suddenly, we will see a new clarity. We will start working out of intelligence, out of divine consciousness, out of eternal bliss.

Just decide, 'Whatever I do out of greed will only result in more and more greed. I have been running and getting nowhere. Enough!' In the same way, if we are escaping from something out of fear, decide, 'Alright, how long can I escape? How long can I run? This fear will come and attack me in some other form. If I am afraid of this and run, I will be afraid of something else later. So let me face it now.'

It is just the fear, not the object about which you are afraid. The object is not going to chase you but the fear will chase you. You may escape somewhere but you are carrying the canopy of fear and greed with you. Wherever you go for a picnic, you open your own little canopy.

There are so many places for great escapes today! They claim that the world's happiest places are the theme parks with all those roller coaster rides and water rides. People even take me to these places to show me. After seeing those places, I feel really sad inside me. These people take me there in the name of entertainment. That shows how much of depression people are carrying inside them. So much of entertainment is necessary means they are carrying so much of depression inside.

By his very nature, man doesn't need so much of entertainment.

If we need so many things to make us happy, there is something seriously wrong in the whole system. We need to look into the system and repair it.

Again and again, Krishna declares, 'Let you work out of bliss.' And I tell you, if you work out of bliss, you will create bliss for yourself and you will create bliss for others; you will never know what tiredness is. You will never even know the word 'tiredness'.

Let me tell you honestly that I still can't understand the meaning of the word 'tiredness'. How can you have tiredness? Tiredness is the inner contradiction between the *icchā śakti* (power of desire) and *kriyā śakti* (power of action), between your being and your action. There is an inner contradiction. Inside, there is a deep problem. Your greed and fear are attacking each other, that is all.

If we are feeling tired, it means there is a big war going on inside us. The Mahabharata (Indian epic) war between fear and greed is happening within us.

Man whose consciousness is clear can never experience tiredness.

In my young age, when I was in college, I used to sit and meditate. In the morning, I would sit for four hours and in the evening I used to sit for four hours. Just casually, I used to sit and meditate. My room-mates would ask me, 'How are you able to sit for so many hours?' And I used to tell them, 'What is there? It is my body, my mind. If you want, can't you sit? If you can't even sit with your body and mind, what are you going to achieve?'

Why do we feel tired? We feel tired when we are not total, when we are not integrated within ourselves.

When we are divided within ourselves, one half of us fights with the other half. One half is the part of our being that wants to express itself but we have suppressed it for various societal reasons. The other half of our being is what is expressing itself in the manner that we are forcing it to.

What happens? Because we constantly have to put in effort to be what we naturally are not, we become tired at some point. When we become tired, the suppressed, unconscious half of us becomes more powerful than the conscious, pretentious half, and it starts dominating the fight.

Just integrate yourself. Be with complete awareness rather than suppressing yourself, and there will be no unconscious half to fight with. Then where is the question of feeling tired?

We feel tired only when we are not completely involved in what we are doing; when our intelligence is not completely behind the action. Become complete, integrated, and whole. Then you can never feel tired, whatever you may do.

See for how long are you able to sit here listening to me. How is it that you are not feeling tired sitting for so many hours? It is because when I speak, I speak from my being, with a totality. When I speak with totality, automatically, you receive me and my energy also totally.

This is the state from which enlightened masters operate. That is why there is no sense of tiredness in them even though they are intensely involved every moment in what they do.

We feel tired only when there is a gap between what we are doing and what we want to do. When we are driven by greed for something, we are caught up in the goal and the goal is something we want to achieve. What we are doing is not yet

the goal and hence, we feel we are running towards the goal. Or we are driven by fear of something; we want to escape from the object of fear and hence, here also we are not completely involved in what we are doing.

Honestly, I am not able to understand how a man cannot sit with himself. It is our body, our mind; that's all. Just sit; over!

You are not able to sit because you continuously pour the wrong fuel into your system.

We are continuously chasing power. We want to control so many things in our life. We have so much desire for power. The power hunger is so high in us that we are always running behind something to get control over it. Understand, first let us get our body and mind under our control. As of now, it is under the control of fear or greed. Let that be controlled by us. Then, automatically, we can get anything under our control. If our body and mind are not under our control, whatever we wish to bring under our control will never come under our control.

One thought from greed is enough: our body just runs. One thought from fear is enough: our body just runs. Let it be completely under you.

Here is a beautiful *sūtra*, a beautiful technique from Krishna to enter into the supreme consciousness:

Just be happy from within. Don't smile for just social reasons. Let your smile be a deep expression of the love in your being. All of us are so used to living an artificial life, driven by social pressures, that we have forgotten our being. Here, happiness refers to the bliss that happens within us for no external reasons but simply happens because that is an expression of our very nature.

We feel happy or satisfied when we are running after our desires or when we keep ourselves away from our fears. So every moment, we are continuously either in greed by running after our desires or in fear by continuously running away from something. Our happiness in every moment is measured only by either greed or fear.

This means we are not actually experiencing the moment. We are not actually living in the present moment. We are continuously in the web of greed and fear.

We are never in the present moment. We can enjoy something totally only when we are completely in it and we can be complete only when we are totally in the present moment, enjoying what we are doing here and now.

When you are in the current moment, when you are completely in the present moment with full enthusiasm, you are in a state of bliss. Bliss is the state of joy that has no reason and which is not affected by the past or future. It is not affected by either our fear or our greed. It is always there.

Naturally, the current blissful moment will give birth to future moments of bliss. We enter a virtuous circle rather than being caught up in the vicious cycle of fear and greed that we are now caught in.

Why do we run behind our desires or why are we afraid of something? If we analyze this a little deeply, this running towards or away from something is fundamentally because we think that life has some goal to be achieved.

We continuously run towards the goals that we set in life. Understand, life in itself has no goal to be achieved. The very life itself is the goal. The path itself is the goal. If we think that the goal and the path are different, we will run towards the goal; we will run towards the horizon. Can we ever touch the horizon? The more we run towards it, we will find it receding from us, is it not? Why? Because the horizon is imaginary, it is an illusion.

If we are running behind a goal in life, we will be disappointed at the end of life.

But when we see life itself as a goal, we make the path itself as the goal. So every moment when we are on the path of life, we are achieving the goal, which is bliss! The goal is achieved every moment of our life.

So every moment when we live with full awareness, with full enthusiasm, we actually enjoy that moment. When we are completely immersed in the present moment in whatever we are doing, we enjoy the path. When the path itself becomes the goal, we enjoy the goal also every moment.

The self-realized one is active and happy because he is completely in the present moment, living in reality. The divine energy blissfully flows through him and he does his activities with that blissful energy. He no longer needs to derive energy for his activities from desire or fear.

Here, Krishna refers to the master being active within. He is referring to the state in which we are in the peak of activity yet in the ultimate relaxation. Such a state is indeed possible and in fact, is the only state in which we can really be involved in what we are doing. It is the *only* state in which we can be completely satisfied and blissful in what we are doing.

This is what Krishna says: When we are tuned fully inwards, we no longer have any attachment to what happens outside; we are one with the All, the Existence, and we have transcended all *karma*, all sins. We are then in *brahma nirvāna*, the ultimate liberation, one with Existence, and we are in *nityānanda*, which means eternal bliss.

When we feel genuine love for others, we will take up more and more responsibility. We would want to share that love with as many as people as we can and for this, we will take up responsibility.

When we are tuned inwards, we live in the present; past and future do not exist for us. When we are in the present, we are one with Existence. I call this All-one-ness. We are All in One. We encompass everything. We do not differentiate.

In this state, we are at the height of spontaneity. Spontaneity does not mean creativity. Creativity is a byproduct. Spontaneity is being in the present, being responsible for everything around us. Nothing is excluded. Nothing is defined. We flow out and reach. We expand and cover.

The more responsibility we take up, the more we expand. Responsibility is something that can be easily shrugged. But if we don't shrug it and keep on shouldering it, we will expand and the divine energy will automatically flow in us. And we can take up more and more responsibility only when we feel overflowing energy in us.

When we take up responsibility, we take it up without any doubts. Usually whenever we are asked to do something, the mind comes in between. It creates a dilemma. It makes us think of a lot of things. We start analyzing intellectually and logically. Our mind starts seeing the pros and cons. We start weighing our options. So at the end of it, we act out of greed or fear.

Mind is dilemma. As long as duality exists, the mind exists. As long as we intellectually weigh the situation for good and bad, the mind exists. We have to cross this barrier. We have to cut across the wall. The dilemma of wanting or not wanting to do something should not come at all.

Remember, as long as there is dilemma, our mind is working. Many times when people come to me and I ask them to do something, just by the very way they say, 'Yes, I will do,' I can tell whether they really want to do it or not!

Our response to take up a responsibility is shaky when we are in a dilemma, when our mind operates. We should take up responsibility spontaneously. Then the mind will not have its say. We just know, that's all. We operate from an extreme

relaxation and spontaneity. The ability to respond spontaneously is what I call responsibility.

Only when we go beyond the mind, beyond duality, we see the absolute oneness and synchronicity of the entire Existence. Only when we are in this state of oneness with Existence, will we take up responsibility. When we reach this state, there is no mind that is acting. We are in a state of deep relaxation or bliss. And this will create the ability to spontaneously respond when we are in this state.

This is very important for us to do good work. When we feel genuine love for others, we will take up responsibility because we want to share that blissful love with others around us. Only when we work out of bliss, we will do good things for others.

When there is no dilemma, when we take up responsibility spontaneously, we do not act out of fear or greed. We are just serving, we are doing good things. There is no expectation, no fear and no greed on our part. We will always be giving.

If we are working out of fear or anger, fear or greed, even if we do good things, it will end up only in trouble. It will not end up as a service.

***Q: Swamiji, how can one control the pressures of the senses? I have the intention but do not have the capability. I need help.***

You are right. If it were that easy, everyone will be on his way to enlightenment. But, it is also true that since there are many enlightened beings, it is proven that it can be done!

You need two things, commitment and patience. This is what we call *tapas* - penance. Someone told me *tapas* is the word for midday snacks in the Spanish language! No, it is not that! Nor is it penance in the form you imagine: standing with one foot raised or one hand raised or standing in water etc. *Tapas* is the sincere commitment to realize oneself, to realize one's true nature with discipline, faith and patience, with no expectation that anything may come of it.

*Tapas* is a state of mind, and it can be developed. In order for it to succeed, it requires intense devotion and surrender to a master and the master's grace.

I have spoken of what I call Living Enlightenment. Every time you need to decide about something that you are not sure is right or wrong or is being done



in a state of awareness, just ask yourself, 'What would my master have done?' Then do it the way that you think your master would have acted!

This is a *sūtra*, a technique, to instant enlightenment. You cannot have any greater guidepost in this life, a better template in this life, than your master. If you can imbibe His teachings adequately you can certainly get an answer to how He would have behaved in a particular situation. Just act in that manner.

One of my disciples narrated to me an incident after I had spoken of this technique. He was walking down the road to work when he passed a person lying on the pavement. Normally he would have walked past. Even that day he almost did. But he said something dragged him back as he remembered my words. His legs refused to move on and dragged him to that person. He called for medical help and stayed with that person till help arrived.

Each time you do this, something happens within you and you move a few steps forward in controlling your instinctive behavior. You become more and more aware. Even if you give in to your senses, that is fine. Do not suppress the action or feel guilty about having given in. You will have the awareness that you should have acted differently and that you should act differently. Just that awareness, along with your faith in the master's words, will help you act differently. And this way, you will slowly transform.



## Know Me and Be in Bliss!

*5.27, 5.28 Shutting out all external sense objects, keeping the eyes and vision concentrated between the two eyebrows,*

*Suspending the inward and outward breaths within the nostrils and thus controlling the mind, senses and intelligence,*

*The transcendental who is aiming at liberation, becomes free from desire, fear and the byproduct of desire, fear and anger, all three.*

*One who is always in this state is certainly liberated.*

*5.29 One who knowing Me as the purpose of sacrifice and penance,*

*As the lord of all the worlds and the benefactor of all the living beings, achieves peace.*

Here, the 'Me' refers to the supreme witnessing consciousness, the Krishna consciousness; it is not the six foot Krishna frame.

I always tell people, the outer guru, the master is needed only to kindle the inner spirit, to awaken the inner guru. Once the inner guru, the consciousness is awakened, the outer guru needs to be dropped. Just like after burning the dead body, the very stick that is used to stoke the wood to burn the body is dropped into the same pyre, so also the outer guru needs to be dropped.

Let us now enter into the technique. For the first time, Krishna gives a beautiful technique to move your energy from fear and greed to divine consciousness, eternal consciousness.

Your fear is rooted in the *svādiṣṭhāna cakra*. This is the energy center that is situated two inches below the navel. Your greed is rooted in the *mūlādhāra cakra*, the *cakra* that is in the root of your spinal cord.

Krishna gives us the technique of how to elevate ourselves from these two *chakra* to the eternal consciousness, the *ājñā cakra* at the brow center, where the eternal consciousness resides, where our very being resides. When we have elevated our self to *ājñā*, we go beyond our ego or mind. We are in tune with the eternal consciousness.

We are all caught in the *mūlādhāra* and *svādiṣṭhāna*, fear and greed. That is why, continuously, we can watch and see that we have a sort of a tensed feeling. We will be continuously holding our *mūlādhāra* and *svādiṣṭhāna* tightly. Here, now, just look into your being. You will be able to feel yourself near the *mūlādhāra* area, tightly holding yourself. You always hold yourself in tension.

Krishna explains how to relax that area, how to stop the fuel coming from greed and fear, and get the *amṛta-dhāra* (flow of nectar) from the eternal consciousness.

Shutting out all external sense objects, keeping the eyes and vision concentrated between the two eyebrows, suspending the inward and outward breaths within the nostrils and thus controlling the mind, senses and intelligence, the transcendental who is aiming at liberation, becomes free from desire, fear and the byproduct of desire, fear and anger - all three. One who is always in this state is certainly liberated.

First, He gives the technique to enter into that state. Then He says, if you can stay in that same state, you are liberated.

Now, at least let us try to have a glimpse of this state that Krishna explains in this verse. I will guide you step by step through this meditation.

Please try to enter into that state.

## MEDITATION

Please sit straight and close your eyes. Let your head, neck and backbone be in a straight line. Intensely pray to that ultimate energy, *Parabrahma* (Supreme) Krishna, to give the experience of this meditation to us.

First thing, visualize that all your senses are completely shut. Visualize that your eyes are completely closed. Don't allow any visualization to happen inside your

being. Not only should you close the eyelids, you should close the eyes also, because sometimes even though we have closed our eyelids, we continue to see things from behind the eyelids. Visualize that your eyeballs have become completely dark. You are seeing only darkness in front of you.

Visualize your ears are shut. Visualize your sense of touch is shut. Visualize your smelling capacity is shut. Visualize your face to be shut. Feel deeply that all the five senses have been shut down.

Inhale and exhale as slowly as possible. Inhale and exhale as slowly as possible. Slowly, let your nostrils blow the air. Let your consciousness reside between the two eyebrows. In a very relaxed way, let you be aware of the space between your two eyebrows. Don't concentrate; don't tense yourself. Just be very relaxed, have a deeply relaxed awareness.

Let your *mūlādhāra cakra* located at the base of your spine be relaxed. Let your *svādiṣṭhāna cakra* located just below the navel center, be relaxed. Let your whole consciousness come up to the *ājñā cakra* which is between the eyebrows. Let you concentrate on the space between the eyebrows. Let you relax in the *ājñā cakra*, between the eyebrows.

Visualize cool, soothing light in the *ājñā cakra*, in the space between the eyebrows. Relax in the *ājñā cakra* between your two eyebrows.

Forget all other parts of your body. Forget about the body, mind and the world; remember only the *ājñā cakra*, the space between the two eyebrows. Relax in the same state in your *ājñā cakra*.

Go deeply into the *ājñā cakra*, in the space between the two eyebrows. Visualize a beautiful, cooling, soothing light in the *ājñā cakra*. Let you experience beautiful, blissful light in the *ājñā cakra*. Don't tense yourself; let your awareness be in the *ājñā cakra* in a very relaxed way; let your consciousness rest in the space between the two eyebrows.

Let you relax in the same space of eternal consciousness. Let you be beyond the body and mind. Let your intelligence be awakened. Let you work from your eternal consciousness.

Let you have the pleasant awareness of the *ājñā cakra*.

Let you all have the grace of the divine consciousness. Let you be established in the eternal consciousness. Let you all be in, with and radiate eternal bliss, *nityānanda*.

*Om śanti, śanti, śantihi...*

*Om tat sat*

Relax. Slowly, very slowly, you can open your eyes.

Try to remain in this same mood at least for the next ten days.

Understand: Don't concentrate by force. Have a pleasant awareness. When you keep the pleasant awareness around your *ājñā cakra*, your whole energy will be directed towards the eternal consciousness. You will receive energy from eternal consciousness, from immortality, *amṛtatva*. You will not be driven by fear or greed. You will be driven from above by the eternal consciousness. If you are driven from below by fear or greed, you are man. If you are driven from above, you are God.

Let you learn the science of how to connect yourself with the divine energy, how to be driven by the divine consciousness. Let you function through the Eternal consciousness.

**Q: Swamiji, how do we know whether a master is enlightened or not?**

This is what is known as information on a 'need to know' basis!

The real question is why do you need to know? Your enlightenment does not have to depend on the enlightened state of your master. You can be enlightened by your own self, as it happened to me. You can be enlightened by a deity, a stone, metal or wooden deity, as it has happened to countless others throughout the history of mankind. You can be enlightened by a thief, a sinner, an idiot and by any one who you believe can enlighten you. You can be enlightened by one for whom you have the devotion, to whom you surrender.

*Your* state is what matters, not the state of the master. If you follow with deep faith and commitment and surrender totally, anything can help you realize the truth of your own Self, which is what enlightenment is all about. You are already enlightened. You don't need to be enlightened. All you need to do is to wake up to the truth.

You cannot know if some one is enlightened or not unless you are in the same state yourself. At your level of awareness, you can only make guesses and the

guesses may be quite wrong. Enlightened masters do not follow any standards. There is no international standard laid down, nor will there ever be. All enlightened beings have the same experience but their expressions may be completely different. So you cannot make any comparisons.

Let me tell you one thing though. The sheer bliss of that state should reflect in that person. No enlightened master can be unhappy; nor can he suffer. He may get angry, may seem to get angry, but you will clearly know that it is only a divine play. His core will remain untouched.

An enlightened master sleeps like a flower in bloom, totally free, totally blissful with no stress or tension.

In the presence of such a master your own mind drops and your ego drops. You move into *nityānanda*, eternal bliss.

*Thus ends the fifth chapter named **Sannyāsa Yogaḥ** of the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of Yoga, dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.*

Bhagavad**Gita**

# Look In Before Coming To Any Conclusion

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CHAPTER 6

You are your best friend and you are your worst enemy. Whether you wish to degrade yourself or enhance yourself is in your hands.



- ◆ *Swamiji*, what Krishna says about yoga and what we see being practiced today as yoga is very different. If it is supposed to be derived from the same source, why is this the case?
- ◆ What Krishna says about equanimity, treating everything the same way, and not getting affected by whether something is stone or gold, may be fine for an enlightened master, but how is it possible for an ordinary person living in this material world?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, is there any harm in sitting directly on the floor and meditating if that is possible? Is it essential to have a floor covering to sit on?
- ◆ I find that on some days I can meditate well and on other days I cannot. How can I make sure that I am always successful in meditating well?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, we are ruled by fears and fantasies throughout our lives. Do they arise from the same source? You have said that we can eliminate fears by facing them. The problem is that we are too scared to face them. That is why the fears seem to continue. How can we overcome this problem?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you said bliss attracts fortune. How does this work? Normally, we believe that if we are rich we can become happy. Are you saying that by being happy we can become wealthy?
- ◆ Respected *Swamiji*, committed one asks: which key is of greatest importance in getting rid of attachment?
- ◆ How does one know the difference between being an intellectual idiot, as against the development of the intellectual ability that you speak about in connection to the *śāstras*?



- ◆ Beloved *Swamiji*, how can one go about getting closer to the present moment? How can we reduce our number of thoughts per second?
- ◆ At zero TPS does the past, present and future exist within that moment?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you talked about Nithya Yoga, which is being taught by teachers trained and ordained by you. Can you tell us more about it?
- ◆ What is the difference between *dharma* and purpose?
- ◆ Respected *Swamiji*, what is the difference between Bhagavad Gita and Maha Gita referred to as Ashtavakra Gita?
- ◆ Dear *Swamiji*, yesterday you said that I am god; I am not sure about this. I did not find a single quality of god in me. Please explain.



## Look In Before Coming To Any Conclusion

We will start with a small story:

A Hollywood director was shooting a big-budget movie in a deserted area. You know how these films are made. They spend a lot of money building sets. The whole film is geared towards fulfilling our dreams. They spend enormous amounts of money on the actors and actresses. They cannot afford to waste any time, because time is money for them.

In the middle of a day's shooting when the sun was shining bright, an old native American Indian appeared on the set and whispered hoarsely to the director, 'Tomorrow rain,' and went away. The director took no notice of the man until it so happened that the next day it poured and no shooting was possible. The director still did not link the Indian's words with the rain.

Again after one week, the same Indian appeared and said, 'Tomorrow storm,' and disappeared. This time too, the director and others took no heed of what this strange man said. Exactly as the Indian predicted there was a big storm the next day. The director had to cancel that day's shooting also.

The Indian appeared a few more times with his predictions. After noticing that his predictions came true each time, the director was really impressed.

He told his assistant, 'We can save a lot of money with the help of this man. Get that old Indian no matter what it costs, we will pay him and keep him with us.'

After three weeks, the Indian disappeared and didn't come back for over a month. The director was very upset and sent out search teams. They finally located the Indian and brought him back to the sets.

The director asked him sincerely, 'Please tell me about tomorrow's weather. I have to shoot an important scene and the set is very expensive. I am relying on you to tell me about tomorrow.'

The old man just shrugged and said, 'Don't know about tomorrow; my radio is broken.'

Look in before coming to any conclusion! This is the message for today.

The sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita starts with Krishna's words. In this chapter Arjuna is not asking any questions to Krishna. Krishna continues His answers from the previous chapter.

### 6.1 Bhagavan says:

*One who performs actions without being attached to their outcome is an ascetic. He is a religious performer of purification of mind.*

*One who has stopped performing any actions, one who doesn't accept the sacred fire and doesn't perform his rituals, is neither an ascetic nor a **karma yogi**, a sage immersed in action.*

*6.2 O Pandava, renunciation leads to the state of yoga where one is linking oneself with the Supreme. This union with the Divine can happen only when you renounce self-interest.*

*6.3 A person who initially wants to start practicing the yoga system laid down by the sages should carry out all activities in line with that system. Activities for all other reasons will cease.*

*6.4 One is said to have attained the state of yoga when, having renounced all material desires, He neither acts for sense gratification nor engages in result-oriented activities.*

Krishna continues with what He said earlier in a little more detailed way. He says, the person who is not attached to the fruits of his action is an ascetic and a *karma yogi* (one who continuously does sincere work without being attached to the results). Please understand, *karma*, the state of action, or *sanyāsi*, the state of renunciation, is not related to your doing. It is directly related to your being. Being a *sanyāsi*, a renunciate monk, is not a status, it is a state. It is a state of mind.

Whether you are doing *karma yoga* or you remain a *sanyāsi* is in no way going to affect you. If one is a *karma yogi*, one goes about doing the work that is allotted to him without attachment and without expectations. This is done even in the

middle of one's life as a householder, a businessperson or an employee. The status is not of any consequence.

In the same manner, it is immaterial whether one dons saffron robes to be a renunciate or an ascetic. One can wear all the outer trappings of a monk and still be fully attached to the *saṁsāra māyā*, the illusion of life. In the verses of Bhaja Govindam, Adi Shankaracharya, the enlightened master of ancient India, says this beautifully about the ascetic who cheats the world and himself. He says, the ascetic has his hair knotted, or he shaves his head bald, or he pulls out his hair one by one in penance, he wears saffron robes, but he does not see, even though he has eyes. He does all this only to fill his belly!

One's attitude, one's being alone matters. Here Krishna gives the gist of the previous chapter.

People repeatedly ask me, 'Swamiji, should we renounce everything to achieve enlightenment? How can we lead our day-to-day life and yet hope to achieve spiritual progress?'

I tell them, 'No! Just renounce what you don't have. That is enough. You don't have to renounce what you have.' I tell them to live with whatever they have, and to just renounce what they don't have. We fantasize about all that we do not have, that is the problem. There are thousands of things that we don't have, but we live with all those things mentally. The problem is not what we have, we have got used to those things anyway. That is our reality. It is what we don't have that creates problems. Just renounce what you don't have. That is enough to solve all the problems. Then you will start living intensely with what you have and you will enjoy being with what you have acquired so far.

One of the major problems we bring upon ourselves is that we chase desires and possessions. And once we have achieved what we want, we don't have the time to enjoy it. It is as if the enjoyment is only in the chase and not in the possession itself. Once we possess it, we simply move on to the next chase, that's all. We spend no time in enjoying what we have, but spend our time chasing what we think we should have. The present has no meaning to many of us. Because of this, we miss reality, we miss true enjoyment. It is the illusion of the speculative future that draws our interest and causes misery to us.

There is a beautiful word in Sanskrit: *brahmacarya*. Just like so many other Sanskrit words, this word has no equivalent word in English. The word has often been translated as celibacy. But celibacy is not the right equivalent for *brahmacarya*.

The word has such a wonderful meaning. In English you don't have an equivalent word because the very idea that this word conveys never existed in the English language culture. The very idea of *brahmacharya* never existed. *Brahma* means Existence, reality, divinity. *Charya* means 'living like'. It literally means to walk the talk. *Brahmacharya* refers to a person who lives like the gods, who lives with Existence, who lives with reality.

Please be very clear, the word *brahmacharya* does not mean one who is unmarried. In the course of time when it was translated as celibacy, people started to use that word to denote an unmarried person. No! *Brahmacharya* refers to one who lives with Existence, one who lives with reality, one who lives unattached.

One of the four stages of life as defined by the scriptures is *brahmacharya*. It is the stage in which a young student learns at the feet of the master. It is the time that a person spends in the *gurukul*, the *vedic* system of schooling. This training starts at the age of seven when the parents hand the child over to a master. The child stays with the master until early adulthood. By the very nature of this system the child stays celibate during his or her stay at the *gurukul*. At the end of this period, depending upon the child's aptitude and skills, he or she moves on into life as a *grhastha*, a householder, or a *sanyāsi*, an ascetic. This period of *brahmacharya*, under the master's guidance in one's early years, provides the background to shed fantasies and live life in reality.

In today's world most of us live with fantasy. If you look in, you will understand how much fantasy there is inside. Our whole life consists of running behind fantasies because we don't live with the reality of our existence. From the time we start interacting with the external world, even from our childhood, we are exposed to so many different forms of media. Unlike even fifty years ago, today the television and the internet flood us with information. They flood us equally with fantasies.

A young girl of ten came with her parents to my ashram. Just for fun I asked her whom she would marry when she grew up. She named a popular film actor who was already married with children. If Rama and Sita had lived in today's world, with all the fantasies being thrown at them, even they would have been tempted!

In our lives, the search for a life partner is a very serious issue. We search for the ideal life partner with great vigour and determination. Nature has intended us to pursue this relationship actively in the interest of the survival of the human race. We spend a lot of time in this activity.

A small story:

An old man used to sit on a beach and watch all the women who passed by.

A young man who saw him doing this for many days, became curious and asked the old man, 'Sir, I see you sitting here every day looking at the women. That is quite strange at your age. Why are you doing this?'

The old man said, 'Oh, I have been doing this for many years now. I am searching for my lifemate, my soulmate.'

The young man was surprised and he asked, 'You mean to tell me, in all these years you never found anyone who matched your requirements?'

The old man replied sadly, 'Well, actually many years ago I did find my ideal mate.'

The young man asked, 'Then what happened? Why did you not marry her?'

The old man replied, 'Well, she was searching for her ideal mate too...'

Everyone is searching for an ideal person who matches their fantasy! Even if we find someone who matches our so-called ideal, when we start living with the person, life will slowly reveal that the template that we so carefully built over many years is different, and the person who we are living with is different. The template can never be matched because the template itself is just a fantasy.

Another small story:

Once there was a couple who were married for fifty years. Everybody including their daughter was surprised as to how they managed to stay together for fifty years. The daughter asked her mother one day about this.

The mother replied, 'Oh, it is no big deal. You just close your eyes and imagine it is not happening to you. That's all!'

Understand! This is what is happening in marriages most of the time. We do not accept our spouse as reality. We don't really live or relate with the real person. We live with our own fantasies and ideas. Though we live in the same house, how many times do we look into each other's eyes? How many times does eye contact

happen? The reason is that there is always a screen of fantasy between our spouse and us, just like between life and us. We don't want to see life as it is. We are not ready to accept life as it is. We are continuously working and developing on life but we are not ready to look into life as it is.

There is a book, '*Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus.*' There are so many things that the author has expressed that we can see in reality, in our very lives. I feel we should find some other title for the book. They should find another title. Venus and Mars are too close. They are from the same galaxy!

Anyway, our life is filled with fantasies; fantasies about how our would-be should be, and what we should do if reality does not match fantasy. We are continuously chiseling the other person and the other person is continuously chiseling us with the hope that the other will match the ideal. We have some preconceived notion and according to our notion, we chisel the real person. All the sounds heard in our house are that of the chisel and the hammer. We are continuously chiseling. We can chisel a stone and make a beautiful sculpture and keep it in our house. We can chisel wood and make beautiful furniture and have it in our house. But can we chisel a living being?

In the Shiva Sutra, Shiva tells His consort Parvati in the course of His teachings, 'In the bed of a married couple, there are four people.' Seeing her surprised look, He explains, 'There is the couple, husband and wife, and along with them there are the fantasies of the husband about his wife and the fantasies of the wife about her husband.' Such a marriage is not a marriage. When husband and wife carry fantasies about what the other should be like, how can the marriage survive?

When we start chiseling a living being, we create more trouble for ourselves and for the other person. A person who is mature enough to live with reality has achieved the state of *brahmacarya*. He is living with the real person or situation. He accepts the present moment for what it is; he does not dream of how it should be. So just drop your fantasies. Live with reality. That is what I call *brahmacarya*.

Here, Krishna says, 'Just renouncing the sacred fire and not performing one's duty does not mean one is an ascetic or *sanyāsi*.' In those days, fire was the basis for everything, whether it was cooking or spiritual practice. For everything one needed fire. I can replace the word 'fire' with 'cell phone' for today's world!

In this age, we can say, 'Don't think that by sacrificing the cell phone and laptop you become a *sanyāsi* or a great *karma yogi*.' Just like how the cell phone and laptop have become a basic necessity today, in those days *agni* (fire) was a

basic need in life. Just like how we are able to relate with people through the cell phone, our ancient *r̥ṣis* (mystics) knew the techniques of relating with the higher energy through fire.

We should understand an important thing: The *vedic* masters knew how to use fire to communicate with the higher energy, just like how we use the cell phone to communicate. All of science is based on using light particles. Science can be reduced to the use of light particles, whether it is electricity, atomic energy, or other forms of energy. Everything is about handling light particles, but with different formulae.

Whether it is our fan or iron or a microscope or a video camera, laptop or atomic bomb, everything can be reduced to that one single thing, the technique of handling light or electro-magnetic particles. Scientists worked on light energy and created all these objects. Our eastern sages worked with sound energy and created all these products. We really had the *pushpaka vimāna* (flying chariot) and we did really have the *brahmāstra* (nuclear weapon). Everything is true.

But in the course of time we lost the technology, that's all. The technology for handling sound waves was lost. As the technology was lost, the existence of these things in the past is questioned today. People now believe that all these things are just mythology, just *purānas*, epic stories. No. We have lost the key and because of that we are unable to open the lock. Just because we are not able to open the lock, don't think that there is no treasure.

The entire collection of scriptures, the *Vedas*, is nothing but learning the techniques of tuning oneself to work with sound particles. Just as scientists work with light particles, the sages have worked with sound particles. They were able to relate with higher energies and were able to communicate just with the vibrations through fire. Whether it was Sanjaya, the minister of the Kaurava king Dhritarashtra, who saw the Mahabharata war through telepathy, or the *pushpaka vimāna*, the flying chariot, or *brahmāstra*, the ultimate fire weapon, these were all true. When the cultural invasion of India happened, these techniques were lost.

I have seen a *sanyāsi* create fire by just uttering a few words. He was able to create fire out of nothing but a few words. Even now, if we go to the *Kumbha Mela*, the holy river festival that occurs once in twelve years in India, we can see hundreds of people like this. I have seen *sanyāsīs* bury their heads inside the earth for more than twenty-four hours. There are so many people who can play with sound energy. I have seen this myself at the *Kumbha Mela*.



Ten years ago at the Haridwar *Kumbha Mela* I saw with my own eyes a *sanyāsi* floating in the air with people watching him in awe. I have also seen a *sanyāsi* sitting on a board full of sharp nails. We even have a video recording of it in the ashram, showing *sanyāsis* sitting on nails and floating in the air. With sound energy they are able to do whatever science is able to do with light energy.

So here, Krishna says that just by renouncing fire, a person cannot become a *sanyāsi*. Similarly, here I can say that just by renouncing our cell phone in life, we cannot become a *sanyāsi*. The attitude needs to be changed. To truly renounce, the mind has to renounce thoughts. Usually, wherever our body is, our mind is not. When we are at home, our thoughts are at the office. When we are at the office, we worry about what is happening elsewhere. When we are on vacation, we worry about work. To bring the mind to where the body is, to renounce the inner chatter, is the starting point of renunciation.

Thoughts cannot be suppressed. The more we suppress them the more they erupt. We cannot control the mind in a traditional manner. We need to let go. We need to constantly bring ourselves back to where our body is, to the present, to the here and now, away from the dead past and the unborn future. Renunciation of the past and future, by bringing our mind to focus on the present, is true renunciation.

This renunciation does not happen by giving up what we believe is essential to material welfare such as the fire and the cell phone. It also does not happen by giving up what we think is superficial to spiritual progress, such as rituals. Giving these up without bringing in the true awareness of consciousness is not renunciation.

In the first verse Krishna gives the essence of the previous chapter, like a follow up. Now He continues.

Krishna has already said that renunciation for the sake of renunciation, renunciation of material things without renouncing desires, is of no value. It has been said that when the great sages went into deep meditation, the gods above would get terrified, especially Indra, who was forever getting into trouble with these sages! You see, in those days, sages, the great *ṛṣis*, were all householders. So Indra would try and disturb them by tempting them. Even great *tapasvīs* (men with the experience of long meditative penance behind them) were not immune to these temptations.

There is a very famous painting that was published on many calendars. Ravi Varma, the King of Travancore, painted the great sage Vishwamitra being tempted

by the celestial nymph Menaka. In the painting, Vishwamitra is holding his hands up shielding his eyes to prevent himself from seeing Menaka. But the fingers are spread wide so that he could peep through his fingers!

All these are metaphorical stories. There are no celestial nymphs because there is no heaven and there is no Indra. If Indra were to send down a celestial nymph each time someone meditated, all men would immediately take up meditation! It is our inner fantasy that comes out as Menaka. Just sit, meditate, and you will see! Women that you have never seen will come in front of you. You have to renounce fantasies. These fantasies are the creation of the ego, mind, identity - whatever name you wish to call it. This self conjures up all these visions, unreal fantasy visions, to keep you occupied, to keep you in control.

We may think that we are in control of our mind. But actually, our mind controls us. This is what Krishna means by *sankalpa*, self-interest, because the mind wishes to satisfy the senses that it operates and controls. By visualizing, by hearing, by smelling, by tasting, by touching, through the sense organs, our mind wants us to experience pleasures that will keep us under its hold.

Only when we renounce the mind's control by going beyond the senses can we become a true renunciate. This is what Krishna said in the earlier chapters. 'Control your senses and still your mind so that you can reach Me,' He said.

When Krishna talks about 'self', it is the small 'self', the external identity that we confuse with our Self, the real inner core, the Truth. If we can, when we do renounce this so-called identity, which is not the true Self, then we will perceive our self as the supreme Self that is our true identity. An ordinary person sees his own self as being the body, mind, memories, senses and the identities that he creates for himself. These are the channels through which we can project ourselves onto the outer world.

Normally we create two identities. One identity called *ahankāra*, is the identity that we project to the outer world. This identity is usually based on our achievements in society, our profession, our possessions, etc. The second identity called *mamākara*, is the identity we project to our inner self. This identity is usually based on our ideas about our attitudes, our beliefs, and our self-esteem.

Through a combination of these two identities we create an image about ourselves that we hold on to with deep conviction and belief. Our true Self is beyond this image. If we don't want to be controlled by the mind, any activity that we perform to satisfy this false identity or ego should be renounced. As long as

we allow our senses to feed us, we will be nurtured and controlled by sensory pleasures that satisfy our ego. Our mind will then keep us in its control.

Renunciation of these fantasies that we feel we need for self-satisfaction is yoga. Yoga is the state when our desires, expressed through sensual pleasures, dissolve. We unite with our true Self in this state. In this state, there is no gap between the Divine and us. Whether we believe it or not, accept it or not, want it or not, we *are* God. We are divine. All we can do is accept it, experience it and express it or we can just continue to struggle and fight with it. This is the truth.

A small story:

A man was informed that his wife had just fallen into the river. He ran to the river to save her.

To everyone's surprise, he ran and jumped into the river and started swimming in the opposite direction, against the current.

People who watched the scene shouted to him and called him a fool. They asked him, 'Why are you swimming against the current? Your wife has been carried with the current, downstream.'

The man said, 'You don't know my wife. Even in the river, she would go only against the current!'

We can be like a rock in the water, forever resisting the flow of the water. The river pounds the rock, eventually reducing it to sand that settles at the bottom. Or we can be like the reed that bends and flows in whichever direction the water flows. There is nothing that the water can do to the reed. By giving in to the water flow, the reed rests in the water.

This is what Christ was referring to when He said, 'The meek shall inherit the earth.' He was not saying that we should be cowards or be scared of our own shadow and then He would deliver the world to us. Meekness here is not cowardice, it is not fear. Meekness is a virtue that allows us to flow with the current. Meekness allows us to flourish. Meekness is the ability to know that we are not in control, but that the universe is in control. Meekness is wisdom. The wise shall inherit the earth.

In Sanskrit there are two terms, '*dr̥ṣṭi sṛṣṭi*' and '*sṛṣṭi dr̥ṣṭi*'. *Dr̥ṣṭi sṛṣṭi* means to look at the world as it is and take life as it comes. *Sṛṣṭi dr̥ṣṭi* is just the opposite, as when we want to mould the world into how we would like it to be. We want the world running according to our fantasies, instead of accepting the reality of the

world. This is a sure recipe for disaster, much like the woman swimming against the current and meeting with disaster.

We have a choice. We can either move against the current, believing that we control our destiny, and struggle all the time. Or we can flow with the current, surrender to the Divine of which we are an integral part, and be in bliss. Whether we go against the current or go with it, we are in the water. Whether we realize it or not, we are Divine. When our desires for external sensual pleasures are controlled, we experience the divinity that is inside us.

This is the state of yoga that Krishna talks about - the state of true renunciation where there is no suppression. Instead, there is transformation. The path is no longer towards self or sensory satisfaction. In fact, there is no 'towards'. There is no goal. The goal is the path itself, nothing more. When we lead our life with no expectations, the mind cannot speculate. It cannot control us through its play with the senses.

Krishna says next, 'A person who initially wants to start practicing a yoga system laid down by the sages should carry out all activities in line with that system. Activities for all other reasons will then cease.'

This is such a beautiful instruction for anyone doing yoga. In the present day, especially in the West, the true meaning of yoga is lost. It is lost completely. Yoga is not about physical exercise and sweating in high temperatures. It is not about breath control. Its purpose is not bodily fitness. Yoga integrates body, mind and spirit. It is a journey into the inner Self, towards the Self.

Patanjali, the great sage who laid down the system for yoga practice in his Yoga Sutras, laid down an eight-part system called Ashtanga Yoga. Today this is being misinterpreted as 'eight steps of yoga'. We will not reach anywhere if we practice each step separately and sequentially. That was not Patanjali's purpose.

Patanjali laid down eight limbs or parts that needed to be practiced simultaneously, not one after another. There is no purpose in practicing yoga through only two of the eight parts: *āsana*, physical postures, and *prāṇāyāma*, breath control. But these are the only two parts taught by most yoga teachers today. What is the point? Nothing of real value will come out of it.

Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga has bliss as its end result and as its path. When practiced properly, bliss is not only the destination but also the path itself. Have you seen even one yoga practitioner enjoying what he or she is doing? They are grimacing all the time, forcing their body, controlling their breath, torturing

themselves. What for? Patanjali never asked them to torture themselves or their students.

Yoga as it is practiced now only breeds ego. Just look at how full of pride the yoga masters are now. They have added many components to yoga: Deluxe yoga, Super deluxe kundalini yoga, Instant enlightenment kriya yoga! There are so many desperate people out there waiting for a solution that these teachers never have a shortage of students.

Patanjali laid down a system that is a way of life. Starting with inner and outer regulation, *yama* and *niyama*, his system cleanses our body, mind and spirit. The steps raise our awareness. Just *yama*, which is one of the eight limbs, has five parts, one of which is *satya* or truth. If we practice this sincerely, it will lead us into enlightenment. Another part is *brahmacarya*, which is living enlightenment. It is walking in tune with reality. Actually, we need to be in the eighth state of *samādhi* to truly be able to practice even one of the *yama* principles with awareness.

The yoga system is a parallel system, not a sequential system. When each of its parts is acted upon with awareness, every single thing that we do will be in tune with Nature. We will automatically surrender to Nature. We will attain the true yogic state of *samādhi*.

*Ahimsā*, non-violence, is another part of the first limb, *yama*. Religion teaches non-violence as a moral injunction: if we are non-violent we will reach heaven and if we are violent we will end up in hell.

But I tell you, no morality can be practiced. Advice is one thing everyone is ready to give but no one is willing to take! It is very difficult to practice any morality. If we are successful, then we will be schizophrenic. If we master any morality we will only be suppressed and eventually depressed. If we can understand and practice, it will never be a discipline. It will be just falling in tune. We will be tuning ourselves to Existence.

There is no reality to hell or heaven. If we are supposed to follow morality just out of fear of hell or hope of heaven, then it means we have not grown at all. *Ahimsā* or non-violence should be practiced out of deep understanding, and then we will start radiating it in our very walk and talk. Even animals will be attracted to us. Our very being will be a blessing to planet earth.

One of the other rules in *yama* is *satya*, truthfulness. Truthfulness can happen in us only after we have experienced *samādhi*, the eighth limb. We can neither understand the truth, nor feel the truth, nor live the truth until we experience

*samādhī* or enlightenment. Until we attain enlightenment, whatever we think of as the truth is nothing but a fact, a perception, not reality. It is the truth as perceived by our five senses. We perceive the world with our 120-degree vision and our gathered societal knowledge, conditioning, etc. It is only when we reach enlightenment that we will be able to see 360 degrees in all directions and perceive Truth as it is. The rules of *yama* and *niyama* (moral discipline) will only be established firmly after we have experienced *samādhī* .

Whether we believe it or not, accept it or not, we are divine. To realize our divine nature, ancient mystics have created this wonderful eight-fold formula of the yoga system. Yoga in modern days is practiced just for health reasons. Good health is just a by-product of practicing yoga, not the end. The actual reason that our wonderful sages created this formula, was to create the divine experience within anyone who used the formula. Yoga is a straight technique to achieve the divine experience. This formula cannot be modified or altered or practiced in parts and pieces. This formula has to be practiced as prescribed for one to realize the divine nature of one's self. Yoga is a formula in which there are techniques that can be practiced to reach the Divine. Once we become intensely tuned to the eight-fold formula, it will become such an integral part of our being that it will become difficult to forget it even for a minute during our day.

When we practice yoga to meet with the Divine we will not treat yoga as an activity to be performed on a schedule only during a particular time of the day. We will live and breathe yoga. These eight limbs of yoga will influence any activity that we perform. For example, if we are speaking to someone we will constantly be aware of the need to speak the truth. If we are performing an activity, our awareness will be completely on that activity.

Yoga cannot be treated as a set of principles and exercises to be practiced only for a certain number of hours in a day. It will infiltrate our life and become our way of life. Even modern man can become a yogi by applying these principles to every single activity he performs. When this happens, all material activities will automatically cease.

I was taught Ashtaanga Yoga by a great yogic master. He started training me when I was barely three and he was then already nearing one hundred years of age. I truly believe that he was a descendent of Patanjali; he was so much in tune with the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali. I hated a lot of what he made me do then. He made me climb pillars in the Arunachala temple in Tiruvannamalai with one hand behind my back! But it was this training that allowed my body to withstand the

rigours of my spiritual wandering through the country and the Himalayan mountains, in search of enlightenment.

Now, I teach Ashtaanga Yoga, as it was taught to me, with the additional insight of Patanjali's vision that I have gained since then. I call it Nithya Yoga. The path and purpose of Nithya Yoga is bliss. It is bliss arising out of the merging of body, mind and spirit, when the glimpse of what we truly are is experienced by us.

The word 'yoga' in Sanskrit means to unite or to become one with. Actually, yoga refers to the process of *uniting*. What is important in the practice of yoga is the journey, the path, and the process. We should understand one important thing about yoga. For whatever purpose, with whatever intention we move our body or bend our body, that idea, that intention, is completely inserted or recorded into our body and mind. This may appear startling to us but it is the truth. It is the truth from my experience.

Whatever thought and intention, the *samskāra*, you hold when you move your body, that *samskāra* will get inserted into you and that *samskāra* will start expressing itself in your body. For example, if you move your body with the intention and the strong belief that you will have health, in whichever way you move your body, health will simply happen. With any physical movement, including just sitting, if you strongly believe that you will have health, health will simply happen in you.

This leads us to another important conclusion: The method in which we do postures in yoga is not important. It is the thought, the idea with which we move our body in the posture that matters. Understand that the body itself is made out of memories. Whether we believe it or not, we are an expression of our own self-hypnosis. Our memories are recorded in our muscles as well.

Here is a simple technique to experience this truth: For just ten minutes in the morning, visualize your whole body as a bliss bag filled with bliss. Then move the body in whatever way you want. The body will start working, experiencing and expressing the bliss.

When we reach the state of yoga, we are in a meditative state of bliss. In this state, all desires for sense gratification and activities cease. Our existence becomes an outpouring of bliss. There will be so much bliss bubbling up from inside that there will be no need to look for an outer object, person or location to influence this bliss. The desire for sense gratification and running after goals will automatically drop when we experience this state of bliss. This bliss is independent

of the external world. It is beyond the body and the mind. This state of bliss can radiate and flow out to touch outer objects, but the outer objects cannot influence this inner bliss!

**Q: Swamiji, what Krishna says about yoga and what we see being practiced today as yoga is very different. If it is supposed to be derived from the same source, why is this the case?**

As I mentioned, yoga as it is practiced today has very little to do with what Krishna said or what Patanjali instructed. The Yoga that Krishna talked about was the uniting of mind, body and spirit. He was referring to the uniting of the self with the Self. He was talking about finding our true nature.

Yoga according to the dictionary means ‘union’, but according to me it is really ‘uniting’. It is the process, not an end result. Being engaged in the process itself is the reward. That is why time and again, Krishna talked about not being attached to the end result. He said, ‘Renounce the fruit of action!’ That is why the meaning of this process is uniting. It has no purpose. Union is not its purpose. It is a practice where the end and the means to the end are the same, so the goal and the path are the same. They cannot be different.

When people followed Krishna’s advice and practiced yoga as He taught, many understood their true nature, as Arjuna did. They realized their true Self. They became enlightened. During this process, which is one of the individual energy merging with the cosmic energy, there were many changes in their body and in their breathing as their mind was becoming still. These changes in the body were the *āsana*, the postures, and changes in breathing were the *prāṇāyāma*, breath control.

Patanjali and other sages observed and codified these transformations that the body-mind system went through during the process of enlightenment or *samādhi*, and this eventually became the basis of Ashtanga Yoga as laid down by Patanjali. Postures and breathing were a part of the total process and not the only parts as they have been made out to be today. Please understand that the body and mind have to work together to synchronize with the spirit. The mind has to have the intention and the body needs to make the movements to achieve yoga. The mind is more important. That is why Patanjali’s treatise starts with the statement that ‘Yoga is cessation of the mind.’ It is very profound and very true.



I have trained and ordained teachers now to teach Nithya Yoga. It is designed from the body language of Patanjali. Nithya Yoga is about adding life to our movements, not adding movements to our life! Even those who sit in an office and work have enough movement to keep them active. What we really lack in our movements is awareness. What we lack is the right intention. What we lack is the direction to seek the truth about ourselves. So I say, please add life to your movements. Do whatever you are doing, but do it in awareness. Nithya Yoga teaches us to be aware and shows us how even simple movements can be done in a meditative way that brings in awareness and bliss. That is what Krishna intended and Patanjali conveyed.

It is not that the sources of these truths said different things. We have lost the codes, the keys to understanding what these truths are. We understand them only from a very limited perspective and apply our own inadequate logic to suit what we think is correct. If the end products work, if we have created a profitable business, we are happy. If there is a problem, there is always Patanjali to blame!



## Are You Your Friend Or Your Enemy?

*6.5 You are your own friend; you are your own enemy.*

*Evolve yourself through the Self and do not degrade yourself.*

*6.6 For him who has conquered the Self, the Self is the best of friends.*

*For one who has failed to do so, his Self will remain the greatest enemy.*

*6.7 For one who has conquered the Self, who has attained tranquility, the supreme is already reached. Such a person remains in this state, in happiness or distress, heat or cold, honor or dishonor.*

*6.8 A person whose mind is contented, because of spiritual knowledge, who has subdued his senses and to whom stone and gold are the same, and who is satisfied with what he has, He is said to be established in self-realization and is called an enlightened being.*

*6.9 A person is considered truly advanced when he regards honest well-wishers, affectionate benefactors, the neutral, the mediators, the envious, both friends and enemies, the pious and the sinners with equality of mind.*

*'You are your own friend; you are your own enemy. Evolve yourself through the Self and do not degrade yourself.'*

In my discourses, if I have quoted any Gita verse more than twice, it is this one. I can say this is the gist of the whole Gita. This single verse provides the essence of the whole Gita.

In the last session, in the previous chapter, we saw how to move from 'doing' and 'having' to 'being'. Usually we are stuck in 'having'. We are constantly focused on our possessions. We are always conscious of our status. It is always 'I' and 'mine'. Loss of possessions affects our ego and identity deeply.

A slightly more intelligent person moves from 'having' to 'doing', from passivity to activity. Then, from doing we are supposed to move to 'being', from activity to active-passivity. This shift to '*satva*', active passivity, helps us evolve spiritually as we move deeper into awareness. In the last chapter we learned the technique from Krishna for moving from fear and greed into divine consciousness and bliss.

In this verse, Krishna says:

'One must deliver himself with the help of his own being and not degrade himself. The being is the friend of the conditioned soul and his enemy as well.'

You are your own friend and you are your own enemy. If you know the technique of how to lift yourself by yourself, you will become a friend of your Self. If you let yourself down, you will become an enemy of yourself.

In our last session (Chapter 5) I asked all of you to practice the technique of centering yourselves in the third eye center, the *ājñā cakra*, for ten days. How many of you were able to practice this? When you practice, naturally again and again you will fall. If you have not fallen, then please be very clear, you have not practiced it right. When you practice anything, naturally, you will fall. Suddenly, you will forget and then realize, 'Oh, I started working out of fear,' or 'I started working out of greed.' When you start working, naturally, there will be a few problems.

A small story:

There was a big spiritual organization. A monk was sent to a remote tribal area to perform service. Suddenly the headquarters received a lot of complaint letters about that monk.

After reading the complaint letters, the president said, 'We have posted the right person. Don't worry.'

The secretary was puzzled and asked him why he thought this despite all the complaints received.

The president replied, 'If we are getting complaints, it means that he has already started working. At least something is happening.'

When we start anything new, we will always have three phases. The first is resistance. The second is avoidance. We just avoid, neither caring nor resisting. The third is acceptance. This is the way anything starts. Similarly, when we start doing anything inside our system, we start growing in the same way.

First, resistance: we will repeatedly fall. We will forget. Our system will resist. We will try to create complications and complaints and all possible arguments. Sometimes, if we can't follow the teachings of Krishna, we start blaming Krishna. I have seen many people, when they are unable to follow the teachings of Krishna, they will go ahead and start blaming Krishna saying, 'What Krishna are you talking about? He was always flirting. He was always with women. What type of a person was He?' We can easily escape Krishna by criticizing Krishna.

When we can't practice these teachings, we start justifying ourselves. Inside our being our conscience will naturally hurt us when we don't practice these things. So we have to make our conscience believe we are doing the right thing. We have to find some argument. Since we are unable to follow, we start criticizing Krishna. This is the best way to escape and avoid the teachings of Krishna.

When our being resists, if we allow the resistance to grow, we are our worst enemy. This is what Krishna means by saying, 'May you lift yourself by yourself.' If we don't, we will be our worst enemy. It is up to us to help ourselves as best friend or to hurt ourselves as our worst enemy.

Please be very clear: Nobody can hurt you unless you allow him or her to. Nobody can help you unless you allow him or her to. May you lift yourself by yourself. May you lift yourself to your Self. Again and again, these masters stress the same point. If you have fallen, if you have failed while practicing these words, the teachings or the meditation techniques, if you have forgotten, don't worry. Again and again, lift yourself. Don't feel depressed and don't have guilt. Don't get dejected thinking you will not be able to do it. Again and again, lift yourself.

The last teaching of Buddha was: *ātma deepo bhava*, 'May your Self be the guiding light.' When Buddha was about to leave his body all his disciples asked him, 'Master, please give us your ultimate message in one word.' Buddha said, 'Let you be the light, the guide unto yourself. Let you be guided by yourself. Let your being guide you.' Here Krishna says the same thing. May you lift yourself by yourself. Nobody can do anything unless you lift yourself.

Just the other day, I came across an advertisement on the internet called 'Super Deluxe Kundalini Yoga' for \$240. It says that one doesn't need to do anything. They sell a by-pass circuit by which your *kuṇḍalini* energy will be raised to the *sahasrāra chakra* (the crown energy center) automatically. All you need to do is to allow them to do the by-pass connection. Then your *kuṇḍalini* will stay in the *sahasrāra* forever.

I was simply shocked! How can someone else awaken your *kuṇḍalini*? Of course, enlightened masters can awaken our latent energy, but only with our own effort can we stay in that same state. They can give us a glimpse, *satori*, but staying in that consciousness and achieving *samādhī* can be done only by us. Only we can help ourselves.

Someone went to Buddha and asked, 'Master, you know that enlightenment is the ultimate thing. Why don't you give that to all of us? Why don't you make us all enlightened?'

Buddha said, 'Oh, you want enlightenment? You think I should give enlightenment to everybody? Please go around and survey how many people really want enlightenment.'

By that evening the man returned after conducting an extensive survey in that city and said, 'Master, only two people want enlightenment.'

Buddha said, 'Please bring them here, let me give it to them.' The man said, 'No, they are not ready to come all the way here from their houses. If you can send it to them, they are ready to receive it.'

Nobody really wants it! And even if we do, we want it as one more item in our showcase. We are not ready to risk anything for enlightenment. We want it as one more item to showcase. Whenever people come to our houses, we can say, 'This is from Delhi, this is from New York, this statue is from Japan.'

Just like that, we can say, 'Oh... this enlightenment... do you know that Master, Nithyananda? He gave it to me. He was giving a Gita discourse that I attended and he just gave it to us. How does it look?'

Just as one more showpiece, we are ready to accept it, but we are not ready to commit or risk anything for it. We are not ready to take up the responsibility for it.

Buddha said, 'Existence is so great that It gives you the freedom to be in bondage. It is your choice whether to be in bondage or to be liberated. Even liberation should not be forced. If it is forced, even liberation is not liberation. So you have one hundred percent choice to be liberated or to be in bondage. It is completely up to you. God is so great that He gives you the freedom to be in bondage or to be liberated.'

Here, Krishna says, 'May you liberate yourself by yourself. Unless you liberate yourself, nobody else can liberate you. If you help yourself, you will be the greatest friend for yourself. If you don't, you will be your worst enemy.' This is

an important verse. This has to be understood well. Let us see the next two verses to get the complete context and then we will enter into the meaning of the verses.

A small story:

Abdullah was a great enlightened Sufi master. He was always in ecstasy, always in joy. One of his disciples asked him, 'Master, how are you so blissful? I have never seen you suffering. You are always joyful. How is this possible?'

Abdullah replied, 'Every morning when I get up from bed I ask myself, *Abdullah, what do you want today? Do you want to be blissful or do you want suffering today?* Naturally what will the mind choose? It will choose to be blissful. Then, immediately, I tell the mind: *alright, be blissful. That's all!*'

We may think, 'How can it be so simple?' Be very clear, we know our twenty-four hour routine. We know what is going to happen in the next 24 hours. Just try this tomorrow morning. Accidents or lottery winnings are very rare. In a normal routine, we know exactly what is going to happen. Just decide whether you want to face that routine with bliss or with suffering. Decide whether to face the routine with joy or with the usual long face. Decide for yourself. You have the choice. And whether you go with a long face or with a smiling face, the routine is going to be the same.

I always tell people, 'Pain is inevitable; suffering is a choice.'

We have one thing that we can choose - and that is our attitude. We can choose our inner space. We have complete freedom to do that. That is purely our own decision with no one to blame. Pain is independent of suffering. Pain is an external thing, suffering is an internal choice.

Abdullah says, 'When my mind says in the morning, *I choose to be happy*, I tell the mind, *just be blissful, that's all.*' It is purely our choice. Hell or heaven is our conscious choice. People always have another question, 'What do I do if my mind says, *I want to suffer?*' Then suffer, that's all. What is there in it? When our mind wants to enjoy suffering, then even suffering becomes an enjoyment for us. That is why we want to enjoy suffering. In a way, suffering becomes enjoyment for us.

So when you get up every morning, ask your mind, 'What do you want today?' If your mind chooses bliss, just tell your mind, 'Be blissful. That's all!' This single conscious decision can change the quality of your life. But don't make a commitment to do this for three days or one week. You will forget. Decide every day for just that 24 hours. People will immediately think, 'Let me decide for my

whole life today itself.’ No! You will forget. You will be back at the same point where you started; you will have the same face again tomorrow when you come back. No, don’t decide for your whole life. Decide only for one day. Only then will you be able to maintain it. Otherwise you will have the same old natural face.

A small story about this natural face:

The head of a monastery, was teaching the young novices to preach. He was giving them tips on how to speak in public.

He said, ‘When we speak, our whole body should express what we are saying. Our face should express the idea that we are talking about. When we speak about heaven our eyes should sparkle and our whole body should show the bliss, we should express the joys of heaven clearly. Our face should shine.’

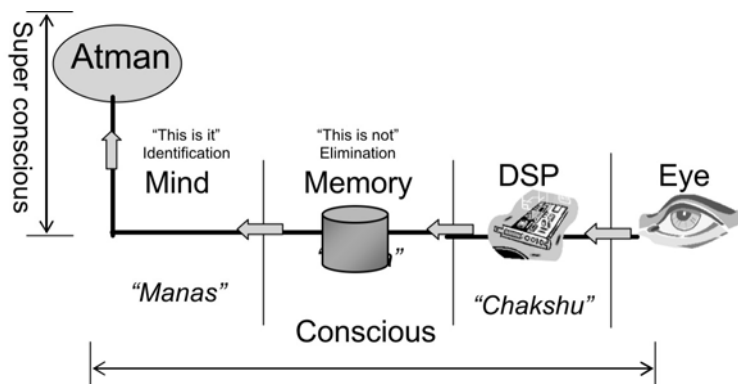
He continued, ‘When we speak about hell, we can just remain as we are. People will understand!’

At least in our life, let us not maintain the long face as our natural face.

Vivekananda said, ‘If you are depressed, don’t come out of your room. There is enough suffering in the world. Don’t go around spreading more suffering!’

When we conquer the mind, happiness and distress are both one and the same and we are not touched by it. Throughout this chapter, Krishna speaks about the senses, how our senses function and what we are supposed to do. Let me give you a small diagram on how our mind functions and how our senses work. Then we will be able to understand the Gita in a much better way.

Now we will see how our mind works, how we perceive information, how we process it and how we make decisions.



First, as an example, let us say we are seeing something through our eyes. Here I am giving the example of the sense of sight, but we can replace it with any of the other senses like taste, smell, etc. Let us take the example that you are seeing me at this moment. First your eyes will catch the picture or the scene.

Actually, it is the sensory energy inside the eyes that does the job of seeing. Please understand, the eyes themselves do not see. Energy sees through the eyes. Sometimes, your eyes will be wide open and if you are listening to some music intensely, even if someone walks in front of you, you will not know. This is proof that you don't see with your physical eyes! You see through the sensory energy.

Let us say we are intensely reading something. At this time, we may not hear any of the ambient noise. This shows we are not hearing through the ears, something else is hearing through the ears or seeing through the eyes. That something else is called *indriya*, which is the energy behind the sensory organs.

The whole file which you see with your eyes goes to what is called the *cakṣu*. The picture or the scene that we are seeing will go to the *cakṣu*. In *cakṣu* an important process happens. It is the conversion of the whole file into a digital file. It is almost like a Digital Signal Processor (DSP) in a computer. If we have to process any information inside a computer, it has to become digital. Whether it is a picture or sound, it has to be converted into a digital file.

Similarly, inside the mind, for any process to happen, the whole thing has to be converted into a bio-signal file or a digital file. The file processing happens in the *cakṣu*. Whatever scene we are seeing now, that picture will be converted into a digital file in the *cakṣu*.

That file will now go to the *citta* or memory. In the memory the process of elimination starts happening. You will start analyzing and eliminating things and saying, 'Na iti, na iti: not this, not this.' First, your mind will say, 'This is not a tree,' 'This is not an animal,' 'This is not a rock.' This process of elimination will happen in the *citta*.

Once the 'This is not' process is over, the file goes to the *manas*, the mind. Here the mind starts identifying saying, 'This is it,' 'This is it.' This identification process happens in the mind. Our mind says, 'I am seeing a man standing with a saffron robe. He is teaching the Gita.' This kind of identification of 'This is it' will happen in the mind.

Then the file goes to the *buddhi*, the intelligence. The process of analysis begins in the intelligence by saying, 'What is the relation between me and this scene?'



What is the connection between this scene and me? In what way am I related to him or this scene?' Our *buddhi* will start analyzing based on all our earlier experiences. We may think, 'The last four or five times that I attended these talks it was really useful.' Or, we might think, 'This is not worth it.' Our intelligence makes some decision. Our intelligence will respond in some way, whether it is right or wrong, whether we like it or not. Our intelligence will write 'yes' or 'no' on the file based on our past experiences.

The whole file will then go to the ego and the ego will give the command. If the intelligence says, 'Yes, I enjoyed yesterday,' the ego will say, 'Sit here and continue to listen intensely.' If the intelligence says, 'No, no, I wasted my time yesterday. It was boring. This is not for me,' then immediately the ego gives the command, 'Come on, let's move. There is so much work to do at home.' The moment the ego gives the command, automatically, our whole being starts executing it. This is the way we receive information, process it and respond. The information comes through the senses, the processing is done and the response is given. This is the way our senses work.

Now, Krishna has an important point here. He says, 'For one who has achieved the supreme bliss, for him happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same.' Throughout this chapter Krishna emphasizes this one idea, 'senses'. How can happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor be the same for a man? How is it possible?

The first thing is that when these senses do this work, we decide 'yes' or 'no' only based on our past experiences, the experiences with which we have grown or the words with which we have conditioned our mind and memory. Our intelligence decides based on the conditioning of our mind and memory. Please be very clear: something that is so tasty for us may be like poison to our neighbour. Why even go as far as our neighbour... Take our spouses for instance. We might like something, but she or he might hate it.

There are three ways to get something done. First, hire someone to do it. Second, do it by yourself. Third, just tell your spouse NOT to do it. When you don't want something to be done, just tell them to DO it, and when you want something to be done, just tell them NOT to do it!

Anyway, whenever our mind is caught in dualities, again and again we fall back to our dilemma, to our nature, to our suffering, to our instinct level. Here Krishna says the person who has achieved bliss is not affected by heat or cold. How do we reach that state? Throughout this chapter He speaks about conquering the senses.

First, we need to understand that when I say conquering the senses, I don't mean controlling the senses or destroying the senses. If we try to control or destroy the senses, we will only struggle more and more and suffer more and more.

Ramana Maharishi, the enlightened master from India said beautifully, 'Instead of killing the person, you try to destroy the chair.' Destroying the chair will not kill the person. Here, our senses are just chairs. Our ego is the person who is sitting there. So if we try to control our senses, it is not going to work. If we try to control our body, that is not going to work either.

Krishna says beautifully, 'For one who has conquered the self.' When he says self, he means the whole setup where the decision-making happens. Mind-Intelligence-Ego is the spot where the decision-making is happening. When we just try to conquer the senses, we will fail again and again. If we fail two or three times we will lose the confidence to try again. If we fail in a fight with our senses, we will automatically start thinking that it is impossible, and we will lose confidence. We need intelligence to progress in this path.

A small story:

A man wanted to go on a vacation to Juhu beach in Mumbai. He started to travel and kept going. After one week he came back.

His friend asked, 'Did you go to Juhu beach?'

He said, 'No, I was not able to find it.'

His friend asked, 'Did you not see any sign on the highway?'

The man replied, 'Yes, there was a board but it said Juhu Beach left, and I thought the beach had left so I came back.'

We need intelligence to traverse this path. If we try to work from the wrong side, from the side of the senses, we will never be able to succeed. If we try to create more pressure on the cooker we will not be able to open the cooker lid. First, we need to put out the fire. First, we need to remove the energy supply. The ego or the intelligence, the place from where we make decisions, is continuously supplying energy to our senses. So all we need to do is to work at the level of the mind and not at the level of the senses. If we try to work at the level of the senses, we will create only more and more perverted desires.

For example, a man who tries to control his eating will dream about having a feast. If we fast for one day, it is enough. That night, in our dreams we will be

feasting! Our body has got its own balance. Our body has its own intelligence. If we avoid something, it has to supply and rejuvenate itself. If we are hungry, we can't sleep. In order to continue to be in the state of sleep, we should be made to believe that we are not hungry. So, the unconscious energy creates a dream as if we are feasting. Whenever we deprive ourselves, our unconscious energy will satisfy itself in the dream state. This is because in the dream state, there are no cops or anyone else to control us. We just project our world and enjoy it. We can do whatever we want.

An important thing to note is that if we suppress something, be very clear, it will automatically express itself in our dreams. Dreams are nothing but expressions of our suppressed desires and fears. Our fear or desire, when suppressed, gets expressed in our dreams. Not only that, it expresses itself in a perverted way. If we enjoy with the senses, we will never become tired. But when we suppress our senses, our being suffers in our dreams. We can see very clearly, if we have a nightmare, even when we wake up, for hours we continue to be in that same mood and our whole being feels shaken.

Now they are coming up with a new concept called 'fear stroke'. These are imaginary fears, such as seeing a rope in the dark and imagining it to be a snake, or imagining ghosts lurking in dark corners. Not only that, they are instant peaks of fear due to simple things such as the sudden ringing of the telephone, etc. We also get these fear strokes in dreams. If we are suffering at the dream level, please be very clear that there is something seriously wrong at the mind-intelligence level. We are trying to control the senses instead of controlling the mind. Instead of removing the fire, we are trying to create more pressure in the cooker. All we need to do is to work on the mind to remove the fire, to stop the supply of fuel, to stop the supply of energy.

Here Krishna says, 'For one who has conquered the mind.' He means that this applies to one whose mind has learned the right processing. If our intelligence and memory are filled with past memories, we cannot make correct decisions. Don't think the mind makes decisions in a logical manner. Sometimes, it makes decisions in a very funny way, as I was explaining earlier about how we make the decision to sit here or not.

Sometimes our intelligence does not even think that much. In the example where you were seeing me with your eyes, if you have had any problems with any other *swami* or any other person who was wearing this same color robe in the past, suddenly that memory will be awakened. Then, the intelligence is not even ready to

sit and listen. Our intelligence is not even ready to take a chance. It is not even ready to think. Immediately, our ego gives the order to leave. This is what we call prejudice.

Sometimes we hear an argument and pass judgment. Many times, our judgment is already made, and we collect arguments to support our judgment. We should look into our life. Whenever our judgment is ready, we collect arguments to support our judgment and we are caught in this network. This creates suffering. A man whose senses are clear, meaning one who is not driven by his sense organs, who is not suffering because of the senses, has the ability to make decisions with clarity. If our mind, especially the area of the *citta* (intelligence), is clear, if that is intelligent enough, then automatically our senses work properly and we make the right decisions.

We can never achieve bliss by controlling the senses. We can only achieve bliss by controlling the mind. By changing the servants, we can't change the leader. But by changing the leader we can change the servants. The mind is the leader or the master who is making decisions and leading the senses. So all we need to do is work on the mind, not on the senses.

Krishna says, 'One who has conquered the mind achieves the *Paramātmān* (divine Self).' We don't need to achieve bliss. It is always there within us. If it has to be achieved, there is every possibility it can be lost. If it can be lost, what is the guarantee it will be there forever? Anything, if it has to be specially achieved, is not worth achieving. But if it is our very nature, then it becomes easy. If it has to be achieved, there is every possibility that after ten days it may be lost. Suddenly it may disappear. Krishna says that all we need to do is conquer our mind. We don't need to achieve anything.

I always tell people that the fountain of bliss is continuously happening in us. Our very life energy is bliss. Unless we have the bliss energy in us, we cannot inhale and exhale. The inhaling and exhaling itself happens because of the bliss energy or the eternal consciousness in us. But we are stopping the bliss fountain again and again. All we need to do is stop the stopping process. That's all. We don't even need to create anything or achieve anything. We need to just stop the stopping process. Krishna says that we just have to conquer the mind because the Self has been already achieved. The Self has been already achieved and we are with it. There is nothing to strive for.

Here is a small story to explain how happiness and sorrow are in no way related to the outer world but to the inner world.

An old man went to a nearby city for some work. When he was coming back to his village, from a distance he suddenly noticed that his house was on fire. He started shouting, screaming and rolling on the ground and weeping.

His son came to him and said, 'Dad, don't worry. Don't you remember, we sold that house just yesterday?'

Immediately, the old man sat up and wiped his tears. The sorrow just disappeared.

In ten minutes, his other son came to him and said, 'Dad, yes, we have sold it, but we are yet to get the money.'

Again the man started rolling on the ground and weeping, 'Oh, I don't know what I will do now. I don't know who will care for me. I don't know how to save myself.'

Some ten minutes later, his wife came on the scene and said, 'Don't worry, just this morning I saw that the money was deposited in our bank account.'

Again the man got up and wiped his tears and became perfectly normal!

If you notice, it is the same situation and the same person. But when he thinks the house is his, he is suffering, and when he thinks it is not his, he is liberated. So what gives us suffering? It is just this single thing: thinking that something is 'mine'. The habit of thinking, 'mine', 'mine'.

In the same way, there are people who can't enjoy something unless it is theirs. One day I was going for a walk on the beach. One of our devotees started saying, '*Swamiji*, I think we should have a cottage here. It would be very nice. We can come out and enjoy the breeze.'

I asked him, 'Are we not enjoying ourselves now? Why do you need a cottage here to enjoy? Just enjoy yourself now!' But the mind never enjoys unless we are sure it is ours. Unless we possess something, we don't enjoy it.

Please be very clear that the man who possesses and tries to enjoy will never be able to enjoy. By the time we own the cottage we start worrying, 'I think I should have this kind of furniture. I should have that type of arrangement.' Or we have already started thinking about another cottage in some other place.

Ramana Maharishi was a great devotee of Arunachala, the sacred hillock in Tiruvannamalai, my birthplace. Someone who went to Ramana Maharishi, visiting

him for the first time said, 'Master, what a beautiful place this is! How nice it is to be here! The Arunachala hill is so beautiful!' Ramana Maharishi said, 'Just be here for three days, all these ideas will disappear!' In three days, we take things for granted. Something will be beautiful only for three days. Not more than that. The person who enjoys only by possessing will never enjoy. The person who enjoys will not bother about possessing. It is just our mind. Sometimes, the mind will not allow us to enjoy something unless we know for sure that it is ours. And at other times when we know it is ours it creates suffering. Suffering or joy is created only by that one link, the mind. If that link is disconnected, the whole process will happen beautifully.

The only difference between an enlightened person and us is that one missing link! It's not like an enlightened person will have two big distinguishing horns. There is no other difference between an enlightened person and us other than this mind, which continuously thinks, 'What is in it for me? In what way am I connected?' If we can cut that 'I', 'I', 'I', 'I', if we can cross that 'I', we will become Christ! Don't start from the senses; start instead from the ego, the mind.

We always complain about the senses. Again and again, we say that our senses are corrupting us. No, *we* are corrupting them. Don't put the responsibility on the senses. It is we who are spoiling them. We destroy them. We abuse them. We must look into our life. It might be late at night, even two a.m., but we will still watch our baseball or soccer game on television. Our eyes are begging for some rest. When the advertisements come on, our eyes close automatically. But we continue to sit and watch the rest of the game. We abuse our eyes because we want to enjoy ourselves.

It is the same story with the *gongura chutney* (extremely spicy South Indian side dish). Our tongue burns and our eyes pour tears but we continue to put large quantities of it into our mouth! Just the mention of it is enough; I can see how many mouths are salivating just now! We abuse and disrespect our senses. Please be very clear, our senses are not disturbing us. It is we who are disturbing them. It is this link: 'What is there for me?' that destroys the whole thing. This is where the whole trouble starts. This 'I', 'I', 'I', 'I' is where we start abusing the senses. All we need to do is control the mind, not the senses.

Another simple thing: hot and sweet tastes are just one and the same. Today just try this simple experiment: stretch out your tongue and concentrate on the tongue. Visualize your tongue as a highway and that you are walking on your tongue. Then take a chili and a sugar candy. Touch one corner of your tongue

with the chili and the other corner with the sugar candy. Deeply witness what happens. You will see that when you touch with the chili and when you touch with the sugar candy, both feel one and the same! When we do this experiment, we understand that if we go a little deeper into our system, the experiences of hot and sweet are one and the same.

Only when we put a rubber stamp on it saying, 'This is hot, this is not good for me,' or 'This is sweet, I like this,' the trouble starts. Only when we label it, the trouble starts. As a process in nature, both are one and the same. We label these experiences based on our belief. Based on our earlier belief system, we pigeonhole our experiences. Based on our recorded memory, we start thinking that this is not good for me as a result of which we really begin to feel that it is not good for us.

We need to understand one more thing: Our thoughts create our senses. Our mind creates our senses. Don't think we are living with what we have. We create what we want to have. Our thoughts are so powerful and our mind is so powerful, it can just change the whole body. For example, just think of one thought that creates disturbance inside. Or just think of an enemy. Or think of a person who took money from you and has not returned it. Consider a person who loaned you money and now asks for it. Immediately, we experience the change happening in our system. The body chemistry changes. Our blood boils, our blood pressure rises, our heart rate and pulse rate rise. Just one thought and our whole system changes. A single thought can change the whole chemistry. Or one thought can create lust, or one advertisement can change our body chemistry. Our whole body becomes ready to respond.

Please be very clear that a single thought can change the chemistry of our body. Our body is created only by our thoughts. It is our thoughts that create the body. In India there is a great science called *sāmudrikā lakṣaṇa*. Just by seeing the face, the body, the way of standing, sitting and walking, the trained sage can tell the quality of the mind. They can tell everything about the person's mind. This is because the sage knows the secret that the mind creates the body. The body is the outer expression of the mind. The mind is the inner experience of the body. If our mind changes, our body can be changed and our whole system can be changed.

A man whose mind is clearly reprogrammed according to spiritual ideas can completely change his senses. As of now, our mind is programmed for misery. It is looking outward. If we can reprogram our mind to look inward, towards bliss, our entire sense experience can be changed.

Please be very clear, all we need to do is to reprogram our mind to look in. This is the gist of this whole chapter.

And Krishna says one more important thing about heat and cold. I don't know how you can believe this, but I have seen people living in the Himalayas with just two pieces of clothing. Let me tell you very clearly: I lived in the Himalayas and I used to sleep on the snow with this same cotton dress. It may be very difficult to believe but it is the truth. All we need to do is stop resisting, that's all.

Just try this experiment: the moment you feel the cool breeze, don't create the idea, 'It is cold, I may catch a cold, I may have wheezing. I may develop sinus problems. I may get asthma.' Just don't create such words. These days, you have learned all these big negative words. The more words you know about diseases, the greater the possibility of getting those diseases! Whenever we repeat something, we create that quality in us.

Here is a simple experiment you can do:

Close your eyes and repeat ten times: '*Shānti, Shānti, Shānti*,' you will have peace inside (*shānti* means peace in Sanskrit). The only thing is your wife's name should not be Shanti! If you just repeat the word '*shānti*', you will start experiencing the word '*shānti*' in you. The quality of peace will start happening in you. In the same way, if you repeat the names of diseases, you will start creating those diseases in you.

I encountered some research recently that I want to share with you. I went to the AAPI (Association of American Physicians of Indian Origin) convention. There they showed me a book containing their research work. One such study shows that in medical colleges, if lessons are being taught about a particular disease, more than forty percent of the students start showing symptoms of that disease. I know this is difficult to accept, but the reason for this phenomenon is that the students are continuously thinking about those symptoms. Another big problem is that whenever we hear about a disease, the first thing we tend to do is to check if we have those symptoms. 'Do I have it?' We check to see if we have the symptoms.

Since the students are constantly meditating on the symptoms, forty percent of them express the same symptoms in their life. Whatever we think, we express. If we are constantly thinking about the wrong thing, our senses will be created in the same way. We need to do only one thing: Work on the mind. Just liberate the mind. Then our whole system will be purified. Our senses will be reconstructed. Krishna gives us a beautiful technique to work on the mind.



He says one more important thing, 'Honor and dishonor will be the same.' This is very difficult to believe. Cold and heat can be the same. Hot and sweet can be the same. We can even accept that. But honor and dishonor, how can the two be the same? One word is enough to anger us. A single word thrown at us is enough to anger us and hurt our honor.

Someone asked me the other day, '*Swamiji*, why do we bother so much about others' opinions?'

We bother about others' opinions because we don't have an opinion about ourselves. We know about ourselves only through others' words and their opinions. We understand ourselves through others. If everybody says, 'You are beautiful,' we get that certificate. If everybody says, 'You are intelligent,' we get that certificate. If everybody says, 'You are great,' we get that certificate. We collect all these certificates and we build our personality with them.

In our Life Bliss Program, the first session is about this. The first session is about why we get depressed, why we repeatedly fall into a low energy state. It is because our energy source is others' certificates. We don't have any self-respect. We respect ourselves based on others' opinions. If others' opinions about us are good, we think we are great. If others' opinions about us are not good, we immediately lose self-esteem.

Have you seen children build castles with playing cards? We too build castles with others' certificates. Our personality is nothing but a castle built with others' certificates. If one card is removed from that castle, what will happen to it? It just collapses. Similarly if a single person takes away his certificate, what will happen to our personality? It will just collapse. We will fall into depression repeatedly.

Please be very clear, whenever we fall into depression, either somebody would have just taken away his certificate, or we are afraid that somebody may take away his certificate. We know about ourselves only based on others' opinions and we build our personality only based on that. That is why we care so much for others' opinions. We have made them our lifeline.

Christ says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' But we don't even love ourselves. That is why there is so much of hatred. We don't love ourselves. We don't have any self-respect. That is the reason for the wars all around us. The first session of the Life Bliss Program is about this. I tell people, if we want to live, we must learn how to stand on our own two feet, learn how to be with ourselves. As of now, our

source of energy is others' opinions. If somebody tells us, 'You are really great,' we may act humble and try our best to say, 'No, no, I am not,' but what happens inside us? Our mind says, 'Please tell me a little more!' Outside we feel shy but inside our mind we want them to go on and on.

We are constantly fuelled by others' opinions and we work to get others' good opinions. Just meditate on this one thought. This is a great technique that can liberate us. Don't worry about others' opinions. Don't worry about what others are thinking about you. Because they are also busy worrying about what you think of them! If we meditate on this one statement, it will completely liberate us from this problem of honor or dishonor.

We must look into our life. Whoever stands in our consciousness, whose opinions we are bothered about, realize that all these people are also bothered about our opinion. Be very clear, if we are bothered about somebody's opinion, directly or indirectly, he is also bothered about our opinion. It is just a give-and-take game. Don't bother about others' opinions, because they are also bothered about your opinions. Meditate on this one statement and you will be liberated.

Krishna says, 'A person whose mind is content because of spiritual knowledge, who has subdued his senses and to whom stone and gold are the same, and who is satisfied with what he has, is said to be established in Self-realization and is called an enlightened being.'

First we should understand why Krishna is speaking of all these qualities of a master. Why is he explaining all these qualities? These qualities are techniques. If we practice them we will reach the same enlightened state.

Please be very clear that an enlightened man's words are *mantra*, words that will transform us. His life is *tantra*, a technique that will transform us, and his form is a *yantra*, a sacred image to be meditated upon. His actions, if replicated in our life, will create the same quality of consciousness in our being. For example, if we listen to music that comes from the heart, like traditional Carnatic music, we will have that same experience of the great saints who composed it. If we listen to music that comes from the *mūlādhāra* (sex center) it will create the same lustful mood in us. If we meditate on some expression, we will have the same experience behind that expression. Experience leads to expression and expression leads to experience.

There are research reports on art therapy. Once, several mad people were asked to paint. They were given canvas and paint. We can imagine how they painted!

They just did whatever they wanted. But the surprising thing is, when asked to paint everyday, they experienced a complete recovery within a six-month period. This is because the catharsis happened. They threw everything out. When catharsis happens, naturally people get healed.

And the next amazing thing is that the doctor who was doing research on this art therapy saw a pattern. He found that those who became mad because of money, all painted and drew in the same manner. People who had become mad because of relationships, all painted in the same way, and people who had become mad because of loss of name and fame, painted in the same way.

A small story:

A man went to a mental asylum, just to see what was happening in there. The doctor took him on a tour around the hospital. In the first room, he saw that one person had written a name all over the walls in blood: 'Latha,' 'Latha,' 'Latha.' He was sitting and chanting the words, 'Latha, Latha, Latha.'

The man asked the doctor what had happened to this patient. The doctor replied that he had wanted to marry some girl called Latha, but was not able to. That is why he became mad. That is why he constantly repeated her name. The tour continued and the man was shown many different kinds of people in different rooms.

One patient was attempting to swim on the floor, another was hanging from the ceiling, and another was walking on all fours.

In the end, he came to the last room, where another person was sitting and chanting, 'Latha, Latha, Latha.' In this room, the walls were covered with the word 'Latha'. The visitor enquired what had happened to this patient and whether he was also in love with some Latha.

The doctor replied, 'No, he actually married the woman named Latha! That is how he went mad.'

So, there are so many reasons why someone can become mad.

All men who become mad because of an obsession with money, paint and draw in the same way. The reason is that only what is inside comes out. In the process of painting, which is really a form of catharsis, they throw onto the canvas whatever is inside their unconscious. And the last and most important part of this

story: the doctor who was researching all this and reviewing all the paintings became mad!

There are three things we need to understand here: First, experience comes out as expression.

Second, the quality of experience and the quality of expression, are very closely related or associated with one another. And third, a very important thing, is that if you concentrate on the expression, you will reach the experience. Here, again and again, Krishna speaks about how an enlightened person lives and the qualities that an enlightened person expresses, so that we can meditate on it. When we begin imbibing these ideas in our lives, we can reach the consciousness of an enlightened being. When we contemplate upon these ideas, we start expressing them naturally and they sink into our being.

Krishna says repeatedly, '*Vijitendriyaha*' (one who has subdued his senses). This whole chapter is just about the senses. If we can understand this one diagram (*cakṣu-citta-manas* diagram) and understand where the problem lies, Krishna gives us a beautiful technique to heal the problem.

He gives us a method to solve the problem and go beyond. All we have to do is understand the problem; understand where we are caught and where our problems lie. Our whole trouble is in the mind, the intelligence and the ego.

In this diagram, beyond the ego we have the *ātman*, the Self. Just the presence of the *ātman* or the light of the *ātman* radiates and makes our ego work. The whole trouble is when we judge for ourselves and start thinking, 'What is there for me? How am I related to this situation? How am I going to gain from this?' or 'What am I going to lose?' Here is where the problem starts.

If the ego and the intelligence are removed from the system, the self starts radiating its energy directly through the senses. That is why enlightened people have sharp senses. Their senses are not contaminated. Whether it is their vision or their hearing, it will be sharp and deep because it is not corrupted by the intelligence and the ego. They have not lost their sensitivity. Please be very clear that only a person whose being is clear will have pure senses. His senses will be sharp and alive. A man who continuously uses his senses abuses them. He will not have energy or *tejas* in his senses.

The first thing that happens to a man who has used and abused his senses is the loss of his sense of smell. If we have lost our sense of smell, please be very clear that we need immediate emergency treatment! We need to be admitted into the

ICU of spirituality. We need meditation immediately. Meditation is a basic need for us. When our mind is under our control we develop equanimity. We look at everyone the same way. This really happens when we reach enlightenment. When we become enlightened there is nothing to be achieved. There is nothing to be gained. Our being will start respecting everyone automatically.

Here the word 'equal' is used, but the exact translation should be 'unique'. We do not treat everyone as equal. Instead we respect everyone as a unique being. Treating others equally is one thing. Treating them as unique is another. When we understand that everyone is unique, we respect him or her. Sometimes when we say we treat everyone equally, we start disrespecting everybody equally! Instead of raising others to a higher level, we bring ourselves down.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa, an enlightened master from India, was such a humble soul. If anybody came to see him, he would first do the *namaskār* (bowing down with hands folded to show respect for the other person) even before they paid their respects to him. Once, an egoistic man came to see Ramakrishna. Education, especially spiritual education without practical experience, is a problem. A man who has read all the scriptures and not become enlightened, is the person who is already in hell. Such a man has a lot of ego. He knows the tricks of the trade, but he does not have the capital or courage to do business.

Ramakrishna as usual, bowed down before this well-read scholar who came to meet him. The scholar told the people stading around, 'After all, he is younger than me. He can bow down to me, no problem.' Ramakrishna said, 'By doing *namaskār*, I try to bring you to my level. But by accepting it in an egoistic way, you try to bring me down to your level!' So be very clear, when we treat people equally, we may bring them to our level. Let us not do that. Understand that every being is unique. There is no equality. When we understand that every being is unique, we will begin respecting every being. We will understand that every being has its own unique place.

We are not all the same. We are all unique. God is an artist. That is why He painted each one of us so differently, so uniquely. He is not an engineer. If He was an engineer, He would have just ordered ten thousand pieces of Mr. India or one million pieces of Miss Universe so all of us would look the same. He is not a mass-producing engineer. He is an artist. When we understand that each one of us is unique, we will start respecting every being.

One more thing we need to understand is that even our enemy is necessary for our life. We have possibly learned thousands of things from our enemies. Without

enemies we wouldn't have achieved what we have achieved. Even enemies contribute to our life. When we are depressed we can remember our enemies. Then we can come out of our depression and start fighting again! We don't know in what ways people contribute to our life.

A small story:

There was a great *sanyāsi*, a very famous *sanyāsi*, who was highly respected all over the world. Suddenly one day, his close disciple found out an important secret about him. The disciple happened to be in the *sanyāsi*'s private quarters and saw that he had his divorced wife's photograph in his room.

The disciple asked the *sanyāsi*, 'Master, I thought you were such a great person. I never expected that you will be harboring such family attachments in your life. Why do you still have her picture in your room?'

The *sanyāsi* just laughed and replied, 'Whenever I want to leave this life of *sanyās*, I just look at her photograph and I get my courage back to sustain in this lifestyle immediately!'

So we don't know who is playing what role in our life!

Even our enemy might be playing an important and helpful role in our being, in our personality, and in our growth. We can't say why somebody is necessary in our life and why somebody is not necessary. Just like our friends, our enemies also may be playing a role in our life. When we understand that each and every being is unique, we will see everybody with the same mind or in the same way. One more thing that Krishna says here is about 'the pious and the sinners'. Please be very clear, there is no such thing as sin, except calling human beings 'sinners'. There is no other sin on planet Earth. Krishna rightly states that the enlightened being sees only divine consciousness in everyone and so can never label anyone as being pious or a sinner.

Another small story:

There was once a priest who never thought ill of anyone.

One day, he went to a hotel for a cup of coffee. It was the day of fasting in his monastery, so he decided to have only coffee. He was surprised to see a young member of his monastery happily enjoying his food at the next table.

Looking at the priest, the young monk said, 'I hope I haven't shocked you sir.'

The priest replied, 'You are eating today! You must have forgotten that it is the day of fasting.'

The young monk said, 'No, no. I remember it.'

The priest said, 'Then you must be sick. The doctor must have advised you not to fast.'

Again the young monk said, 'No, no. I am fine. Nothing is wrong with me.'

Now the priest was really stunned and thought to himself, 'How honest this fellow is! He would rather admit his sins than tell a lie!'

Understand: God also accepts each one of us as we are. The people who created society created the idea of sin and merit. Immediately, the next question will be, 'Then can we do whatever we want?' A man who understands this spiritual science will never disturb others. Again and again, I tell people, our sin and merit should not be based on fear or greed. If it is just based on heaven or hell, I don't think we can claim to be matured beings. Our sin or merit should be out of our understanding, not out of greed for heaven or fear of hell. Don't live a disciplined life out of motivation for heaven or fear of hell. Let discipline happen to you as an understanding, a natural flowering. If we are afraid of the police and follow the traffic rules, then whenever we don't see a police car, there is a small temptation, 'Why not press the accelerator a little bit more?' Especially in Los Angeles, when there is hardly any traffic, we always try to speed for at least a few miles!

Actually stepping the wrong way is a deep temptation. Breaking rules can be exciting, especially when something is forbidden. It becomes really attractive. The forbidden fruit is always tasty.

So, whenever we listen to a rule, automatically we try to go beyond it, we try to break it. Let our morality not be based on fear and greed. That is why in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, or aphorisms, there is a beautiful word *yama*. *Yama* means discipline. It also means death. If we understand that our life is going to end in death, and if we understand that death is the result of our life, if our consciousness imbibes this truth, we start thinking and meditating upon death. We will automatically be disciplined. If we start thinking about death, we will completely restructure our whole thinking and our life. Our whole life will be restructured. If we start thinking about *yama* (death), then *yama* (discipline) will happen in our life. In Sanskrit, for both discipline and death, we use the same word. If we understand that death is going to happen to us, automatically we will imbibe discipline in our life. Discipline happens to us when we realize that death comes to everyone and

we realize that life is going to end. Let our discipline happen only out of understanding of death and not out of fear or greed.

*Q: What Krishna says about equanimity, treating everything the same way, and not getting affected by whether something is stone or gold, may be fine for an enlightened master, but how is it possible for an ordinary person living in this material world?*

Before we talk about stone and gold, let us analyze our emotions. Let us take someone who gets angry very quickly. The more he gets angry, the more he seems addicted to being angry. Biologists tell us that repeated behavior actually rewires the brain. Neural networks get established with repeated behaviour patterns. The brain releases neuro-peptide proteins specific to each emotion. These neuro-peptides cause new receptors to grow in our cellular system in order to accommodate repeated emotions. Anger literally breeds anger.

Emotions not only rewire the brain, but they also rewire the body. In their efforts to accommodate these repetitive emotions, cells lose the capacity to absorb nutrients. They grow less and they rejuvenate less. These changes affect us, and more importantly, affect our progeny as well, as our entire cellular and DNA structure can be changed by our behavior. Biology tells us that our emotions are chemicals and that the brain releases these chemicals. We control these chemicals. However, over time, these chemicals can change and control us.

We should watch when we get angry the next time. What are we angry about? Are we angry with someone or are we angry about something? If we say that we are angry about something, about some behavior, we should watch ourselves as someone else repeats that behavior. Do we get equally angry? Do we allow some people to get away with such behaviour, or even humor such behavior from some people that would make us blow up with another person? Are we angry with a person because we have made up our mind to be angry with that person?

We will find that ninety percent of the time we are angry with a person not with a behavior or an issue. If we are angry with an issue we can learn to use that anger as energy and do something with that energy. If it is behavior, we can learn to laugh at it. However, if it is a person, we have a deeper problem. We have already made a judgment about that person and all that we do is collect evidence to support that judgment. Nothing that that person does can be right for us.



With awareness we can drop these judgments. Awareness makes us realize the truth that we and everyone else are the same at a deeper level. If we are getting angry with someone, we are in fact getting angry with ourselves. It is our own negativities that make us see others negatively. It is possible to drop these negativities through meditation.

In our second level course, Life Bliss Program Level 2, the Nithyananda Spurana Program, we take participants through techniques that educate them and cleanse their systems. Engraved memories are brought to surface and worked out. These memories are in the unconscious mind and are responsible for our decisions and actions. The mind-body system reverts to its pristine state. They are, in fact, reborn.

Look back in time to when you were a child. How carefree, curious, adventurous and happy you were! Did you care whether your toy was made of stone or gold? It made no difference. You still enjoyed playing with it. As you grew up in years, you learned to differentiate between gold and stone. Did that make you happier? It brought suffering in a way.

Krishna is talking here about reverting to that state of childlike equanimity, but now with awareness, so that our suffering can be eliminated. What would we rather have? Would we prefer the ability to see the difference between gold and stone and be miserable? Or do we want the awareness to treat both the same and be in bliss? It is our choice.



## Controlling The Mind

*6.10 A yogi should always try to concentrate his mind on the supreme Self;*

*Remaining in a secluded place, he should carefully control his mind without being attracted by anything and should be free from the feeling of possessiveness.*

*6.11 In a clean and pure place, one should establish his seat by laying kuṣa grass, a deerskin and a cloth one over another, neither too high nor too low.*

*6.12 Sitting firmly on that pure seat, the yogi should practice the purification of the self by controlling the activities of the mind and the senses.*

*6.13 Holding the body, head and neck steady, looking at the tip of his nose without looking in any other direction.*

*6.14 Let him sit with an unagitated mind, free from fear and in tune with Existence, controlling the mind, focusing it on Me and making Me the supreme goal.*

In these verses Krishna gives directions for the practitioner of yoga, the *yogi*. There are instructions about both the state of the mind and the state of the body. These verses are often quoted and misused with a literal understanding and without grasping the inner meaning and significance. We can sit with closed or half closed eyes, with spine erect, in a sound-proofed dark room, and still be far away from enlightenment. Understand, these are general and practical guidelines given to help us with how we should sit and meditate. These are not essential qualifications for enlightenment.

Krishna repeats the importance of controlling our senses again and again. Why? Senses are our doors to the external world. As long as they are open and uncontrolled, we are immersed only in the external world. It is impossible to understand our true reality when we are studying the external world. We may

become a great scientist or a wealthy businessman by observing the outer world, but never an enlightened person. For this path, looking inwards is the only way.

Controlling the senses requires controlling the mind. Controlling the mind requires control of thoughts. If we sit for a few minutes and analyze our thoughts, we will find that there is no connection between one thought and another. There is no logic in our thinking process. By their very nature our thoughts are illogical, unconnected and irrational. Thoughts keep swinging from past to future and back to the past.

We need to do two things to control our thoughts. First, we need to stay in the present moment by refusing to move to the past and future and second, we need to disconnect thoughts. I call this unclutching. We need to be aware that thoughts are not inherently connected. We connect them into a shaft of joy or sorrow. These shafts do not exist at all. So I say to you, unclutch and become liberated. I am not saying to stay without thoughts. That is not possible; just witness thoughts. Understand that thoughts are unconnected. Detach yourself from the emotional baggage of the thoughts. If we detach ourselves from the regrets of the past and the speculations about the future we will automatically rise into the present.

We cannot live without desires. If anyone tells us that we can reach enlightenment through elimination of desires, it is incorrect. First of all, we are already enlightened. Our inner Self knows it is connected to the Divine. We are just not aware of it, that's all. If we are already there, how can we achieve it? Second, desires are energy. We cannot inhale and exhale without the desire to live. Simply dying will not give us the experience!

When Buddha talks of desires being sorrowful, he means that the attachment to desires brings sorrow. That is what Krishna talks about here - dropping the attachment and possessiveness. It is the feeling of 'mine,' the desire to possess, that creates the feeling of 'I,' not the other way around. Our identity is made up of all the things that we want, that we desire, that we are attached to. These constitute our mental make-up. The seeds of desire and embedded memories are the stuff our package of 'I' is made of. Once the feeling of possession, the feeling of 'mine' disappears, it is possible to shed our identity as well. When we are free of the feeling of 'mine' and 'I,' when we are not attached or attracted to external objects, when we are not led by our senses, we have steadied the mind and senses. To facilitate this, Krishna stipulates the conditions.

There are a few things to note here. For example, we should go to a secluded place. Why? Whatever said and done, in the house, the phone may ring, somebody

may knock or some salesperson may call. A secluded place is really just a means to move us away from these disturbances.

The kuṣa (a type of grass considered ideal to sit on and meditate), deerskin and all those things are like insulation, so that the earth will not absorb the energy we create. But now we don't have to bother about that, since we usually sit in a chair, raised a little from the ground. The seat should neither be too high nor too low and it should be comfortable. That's all. The most important thing to be aware of in any meditation is to be relaxed. We cannot meditate in discomfort. *Sthira* (stable) and *sukha* (pleasurable) are the basic essentials of any meditation posture.

Here Krishna updates the technique that He gave earlier. Here He gives three more instructions:

1. Head, spine and neck should be in a straight line.
2. We should fix our eyes on the tip of the nose. If we look at the tip of the nose, naturally, our awareness will settle on the third eye. Our concentration will settle on the *ājñā cakra* (the brow energy center).
3. We should meditate on 'Me' as the supreme goal.

These are simple, commonsense instructions. Keeping the head, neck and spine, all in one line, helps in two ways. Firstly, it prevents us from dropping off to sleep. If we doze, our neck will drop, and we will no longer be steady. Secondly, as long as the head, neck and spine remain steady and vertical, the flow of *pranic* energy, the life-giving energy, through the energy pathways will be unblocked and smooth.

A small story:

In Chennai, South India, there was a famous preacher. He was well known but boring. People used to go to sleep listening to him. On the day he died, a bus driver from Chennai also died. In Chennai, bus drivers are like Yama, the god of death. They drive buses just to terrorize people. People both inside and outside the bus pray for their own safety.

When they both arrived at the gates of heaven, the driver was speedily ushered into heaven's first class suite. The preacher found himself escorted to a hot and humid space, very similar to the Chennai climate.

The preacher started screaming, 'There is no justice in the land of Yama. I, a great preacher, am being led to hell, while this driver goes to heaven. Will someone give me justice?'

Yama heard his screams and explained, 'Here we go by the end result caused by you on planet earth, irrespective of what you might have been doing as a profession. When the driver drove, fearing for their lives, many people remembered god and prayed to Him sincerely. You, on the other hand, through your preaching only put people to sleep!'

That is why I am always afraid with you people. When I talk and teach you meditation, you doze off. Just think, Yama may say the same thing to me! So at least for my sake, keep your eyes open.

Whether we close our eyes fully or half close them, it is important that we disconnect from the external world. When the eyes are focused on the tip of the nose, they are not looking at external objects and ninety percent of sensory inputs are cut off. In addition, the focus is on the third eye between the brows, which, when energized, dissolves the ego block.

Finally, Krishna says, 'Focus on Me.' He means our true Self. If we like, we can meditate on the form of Krishna, with a flute and peacock feather. But I always prescribe going beyond the form. Go into your being. Of course, when we enter into our third eye, automatically we will go beyond the form. We will start meditating on the formless energy that is beyond the form.

***Q: Swamiji, is there any harm in sitting directly on the floor and meditating if that is possible? Is it essential to have a floor covering to sit on?***

As I said earlier, whatever Krishna says here in terms of what to sit on and how to sit is only from a practical point of view, based on conventions of those days. Where would you go for *kuṣa* grass today, or a deerskin? Animal rights activists will come after you if they see you sitting on a deerskin!

What is implied here is that you should follow some fundamental principles of hygiene and cleanliness. That is all. People often ask me whether they should have a bath before meditation. There is no real need but if you feel sleepy it is a good idea to bathe so that you feel fresh. Even in the morning, if you move straight from the bed into meditation even without brushing your teeth, you may be in a half-awake state and fall asleep as you try to meditate. Other than that there is no rigid rule that you must bathe or that you must sit on a floor covering to meditate.

What you need is some basic discipline like in every other activity that you engage in. Meditation is also a kind of skill. You need to practice with sincerity to be successful in it, as with every other activity that you undertake. Just because it is considered a spiritual activity, you cannot say that this skill or habit will descend on you from the heavens above.

That is the reason Krishna is laying down basic guidelines for meditation. He knows how unstable our minds are. Even when all these guidelines are laid down so clearly you will go and do what you please. If nothing is laid down, God only knows what you will end up doing. In every discourse at least one person will ask me whether he or she can meditate while lying down. Once I asked that person why he would like to meditate while lying down. He said with all sincerity that it will save him time as he can lie down, meditate and then go to sleep!



## Neither Too Much Nor Too Little

*6.15 Always practicing control over the mind and established in the Self, the yogi attains peace, the supreme liberation and My kingdom.*

*6.16 Yoga is neither eating too much nor eating too little; It is neither sleeping too much nor sleeping too little, O Arjuna.*

*6.17 One who is regulated in food, rest, recreation and work, sleep and wakefulness can reduce misery.*

*6.18 When the mind is disciplined and one is established in the Self, free from all desires,*

*then one is said to be established in yoga.*

*6.19 As a lamp in a place without wind does not waver, so also the yogi whose mind is controlled remains steady, engaged in yoga, in the Self.*

Krishna talks here about control of the mind and being established in the Self. He talks about the path and the goal of yoga. The first line of Yoga Sutras starts with 'yogaḥ citta vṛtti nirodah.' It means: Yoga is cessation of the mind.

The very first line gives the path and the goal of yoga. The word yoga means uniting with the Divine. To reach the Ultimate, the goal and the path is the practice of Yoga.

The goal is uniting with the Ultimate or experiencing the ultimate spiritual energy, universal energy, cosmic energy or cosmic intelligence. The path is dropping the mind, which means going beyond thoughts. The ultimate goal of yoga

is uniting with Existence or the Divine and realizing our inherent nature. We are spiritual beings having a human experience; we are not human beings having a spiritual experience. This is the truth. If we consider ourselves to be human beings striving for a spiritual experience, we will be striving to achieve something that is not our true nature. But I tell you, bliss is our very nature. We are spiritual beings having a human experience. All that we need to do is go back to the source and realize our true nature.

The mind pulls us towards the temporary happiness that we experienced by pursuing the pleasures of our sense organs. For example, there might be some particular sweet that we like. We are attracted to its taste. When we sit down to eat it, for a few minutes our mind seems to stop thinking about it. There seems to appear a sense of peace when we are eating the sweet. Actually, we are at peace because the number of thoughts has come down for those few minutes. But without realizing this, we think the peace we experience is due to the sweet itself.

Understand that there is nothing wrong with liking the taste of the sweet. We feel fulfilled with the sweetness. But if we are attracted to the sweet thinking that the sweet is the cause of our fulfillment, then the problem starts, because the next time the same sweet may not give us the same experience of fulfillment. The experience of fulfillment has nothing to do with the object of experience.

In the same way, if we hold on to an object that we think gives us bliss, we will create an attachment to that object. But the experience of bliss is different from the object. It is in no way related to the object. Bliss is beyond attachment to any object, material or spiritual. Bliss is beyond the pairs of opposites. When we are happy due to some pleasurable event or person, the momentary joy comes because the number of our thoughts comes down when we meet the person. When the number of our thoughts comes down, bliss happens in us. But the bliss itself comes only from our own being, not from the person who we met. In fact, it continuously happens within us, irrespective of anything that goes on outside. Then why do we not feel the bliss continuously? It is because we are under the control of the mind, which needs the pairs of opposites to survive. We can, however, go beyond the mind.

We can stop the stopping of the fountain of bliss that is happening every moment in us. Our first level program, Ananda Spurana Program or the Life Bliss Program Level 1, is all about how to unlock and energize the seven major energy centers, the seven *cakras*. In this program, participants learn how to bring forth the eternal fountain of bliss in themselves.



When I say 'eternal bliss', what do I mean? '*nitya*' or 'eternal' means the past, present and future all put together, because it is beyond time. It cannot be called new or old because it always existed. It is beyond time. But, the eternal can be touched only in the present. Being in the present is what eternity is. Bliss cannot be experienced in the past or future because these are not reality. The only reality is the present. So, bliss can be experienced only in the present.

When we are not completely in tune with the present, we have an idea in our mind as to how the present moment should be, how it could be better or different. Be very clear, this indicates that we are not completely in the present, because how can we completely experience the present when we have fantasies in that moment about how that moment should be?

When we are completely in reality, in the present, we are completely in tune with Existence and we are in bliss. This is eternal bliss. The present blissful moment gives birth to the next moment, which will be blissful. It will automatically give rise to the next blissful moment. But if we try to look for bliss in the future, thinking that we can do various things to create a blissful future, it will never happen. When we are not in reality now, we are creating the blissful future from our fantasies in our fantasy world. So accept reality here and now and be blissful; automatically the future will also be blissful.

Bliss is like the water in a river. We can keep our hands open in it and enjoy it. But if we try to hold the water with closed hands, it will simply flow away from us leaving our hands empty. If we want to be in eternal bliss, we need to be blissful this very moment. We should not bother about whether we had bliss in the past or whether we will have it in the future. Just be blissful now.

When Krishna talks about the mind and the senses being controlled, He is not talking about suppressing the mind and the senses. That is impossible to do. People who claim to renounce the world and its material aspects still cling to desires. Their efforts to suppress these desires do not work and result in misery and unacceptable action. All we can do is to transform those desires. Instead of directing our senses towards external objects and the pleasure derived from these objects, it is possible to turn our focus inwards and experience inner joy. Once the senses and the mind discover this inner joy, on their own they will give up their attachment to external pleasures. Suppression never works; what works is transformation.

To be balanced in whatever we do and to act without attachment is the path of a *yogi*. For any activity, moderation is needed. This is what Buddha meant by the 'middle path'. Whether it is eating or sleeping or working, we should be sensitive

to our body's intelligence. Understand, when we are aware, we will be sensitive in all our actions. The awareness will show us what is conducive to our system. Only when we are not completely aware or conscious will we be caught in confusion.

Yoga manuals will not tell us what Krishna tells Arjuna here. Guidelines on sleeping too much or too little or eating too much or too little is in no way a prescribed method for yoga. Controlling or regulating the senses does not mean we should suppress the senses. Eating too much will only make us lethargic - *tamasic*. Eating too little will make us crave more food. If we sleep too much, it will lead to laziness and lethargy, *tamas*. If we sleep too little, we will end up feeling tired because the body-mind is not rejuvenated enough.

How do we know what is too much or too little? Here, Krishna actually refers to our body intelligence. The body has intelligence to maintain itself. But we do not trust our inherent body intelligence. We run our body according to the mind or according to our desires and senses. Otherwise, why would we stay up in the night watching television when our eyes are already tired and our body is begging for some sleep? Why would we overeat? Has anyone seen any animal ever overeat? Have we seen an obese animal in the wild? Maybe pets and animals in zoos become obese because we feed them the way we eat. But have we seen an obese wild animal? They eat according to their body intelligence. When the body signals that it needs food, they eat. When the body signals that it needs sleep, they sleep. The problem is that we have forgotten how to relate with our own body intelligence.

After eating, after giving energy to the body, we should feel energetic. But do we feel energetic after lunch? Why do we feel lazy and sleepy after lunch? It is because we do not eat the right type and amount of food. Most often, we eat much more than what we need. We don't need to eat the amount we do, for our body to run. Just try this for a few days: When you eat, eat just enough until you are about full but not completely full. When you feel you can eat one more handful of rice or food, stop. Try this for a few days and you will see a difference.

Similarly, we do not need to sleep for as long as eight hours as most of us do. Even science has established that there are periods in our sleep - the dream and deep sleep states that determine our holistic health. The deep sleep state is what rejuvenates us. Actually, it is in the deep sleep state that we access the causal body, the *kāraṇa śarīra*. This is where we derive our energy from, where we touch the source of our energy. Touching this layer is what gives us energy. This state can be

achieved through meditation as well. In the course of an eight-hour sleep cycle, we are in the deep sleep state only for a couple of hours. That is why even a few minutes of meditation can actually refresh us as much as a few hours of sleep, because we access the same energy of the causal body through meditation.

Once the mind comes in between and demands either too much sleep or too little sleep or too much eating or fasting, we are ignoring the body intelligence and are going with the mind. We should trust our body intelligence and just try living by becoming sensitive to the body, rather than be driven by the mind, the senses and our routine.

Krishna talks about *āhāra* in these verses. *Āhāra* in Sanskrit means food. It is not merely what is consumed through the mouth. It is the food that is taken in through our five senses. It includes all that we take in through all the senses, the sights that we see through our eyes, the sounds that we hear through our ears, the fragrances that we smell, the sensation of touch and even the memories that we store and access.

*Pratyāhāra*, one of the eight parts of yoga, is the control of sensory inputs. It means going beyond these *āhāra*, beyond the sense objects, so that the higher level of consciousness can be awakened. When we move away from the senses and experience bliss, we will automatically realize that what we experience through external sense objects is not bliss. What we experience through the senses can be called pleasure or joy. Some external objects give us joy. That is why, the opposite of joy, that is pain, is bound to follow this temporary pleasure. Bliss is beyond the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain; it is not related to external incidents or people. It is internally generated.

The main aim of all our yoga and meditation techniques is to reach the level of our being. When we reach the being, we are in '*nitya ānanda*' or 'eternal bliss'. We are in union with the Divine. As of now, we are running behind something in the outer world because we think it can give us what we are ultimately looking for, bliss. Bliss is actually what we are running after but we think it can be achieved through money, comforts, relations and what not. We do not realize that all these objects only give us temporary states of pleasure and happiness. Our inherent nature is bliss and that is the reason why we are constantly searching for this state of bliss. When we realize that bliss is happening inside us all the time, the desires will drop automatically. You cannot drop desires. You cannot suppress them because they will surface again with greater intensity. The desire has to drop you through your awareness.

When we are aware of our actions, we can never be addicted to anything. Be very clear, all addictions, whether smoking or drinking, drugs or anything else, cannot exist if we are conscious and aware when we are engaged in the action. We try to suppress the desire instead of being aware, and that is where the problem starts. When we repeat the words, 'I want to quit smoking,' we are actually giving power to the word 'smoking' without even being aware of it. Words are energy. What we speak, what our mind thinks, gets inscribed in our body. Our body gets prepared to execute the action. So we should not use the word smoking again and again.

A beautiful incident from Ramakrishna's life:

Once a devotee came to Ramakrishna saying that he was addicted to drinking and did not know how to give it up. Ramakrishna gave him a simple though surprising remedy. He told the devotee to surrender the drinking habit to goddess Kali. The man was obviously shocked but he started offering the drink to mother Kali and then drank intensely. You'll be surprised but the man came back in just three days to Ramakrishna saying that he had given up drinking. The drinking habit had dropped him.

An addiction has power over us because of a feeling of guilt, or a feeling of regret, or a feeling of unfulfillment. Through the addiction we try to close a gap, to rectify an error. As long as we are not aware of the fact that we need not carry guilt for anything that we have done, the addiction will persist.

I say that guilt is the greatest sin we can commit and carry. Whatever we did in the past was with the wisdom we had then. We realize it was a mistake because now, we have updated intelligence to realize it. It is great, but do not commit that error again. And also drop that guilt. When we drop the guilt that we have been shouldering, many of our repetitive negative behavior patterns stop automatically.

Moreover, we cannot consciously send something harmful into our system. We cannot consciously inhale harmful smoke into our system. As long as we drink or smoke as a ritual, it becomes an addiction. To those who come to me for help with addictions, I say, 'Smoke as much as you want. Drink as much as you want. But do it with awareness. Do it with enjoyment.' In a few days, they come back and say they cannot smoke or drink anymore. That is because the innate body intelligence refuses to cooperate with the disastrous activity.

Awareness is the key to bring the mind under control, because then we become the master of our mind, instead of the mind being our master. Normally, our mind

oscillates between the past and the future just like the flame of a lamp that's wavering in the wind. When the same lamp is placed in a windless place, it stops flickering. By nature, the mind is in dilemma. We cannot suppress it or control it just by allowing it to wander either. All we can do to still the mind is to stop bothering about it and just witness it. So just relax.

If we look deeply, every thought that occurs in us occurs as an independent thought. Each and every thought is completely unrelated, illogical and unconnected to any other thought. Thoughts appear in us just like individual bubbles in a fish tank. The mind holds on to these thoughts and starts connecting them and comes to conclusions and opinions. By connecting painful thoughts, we form pain shafts and by connecting pleasurable thoughts, we create joy shafts. Once we start believing that our life is pain, we are waiting unconsciously for painful incidents to occur and strengthen that belief, to strengthen that judgment. While we are adding painful incidents unconsciously, at the conscious level we are constantly attempting to break the shaft we created.

On the other hand, if we believe that our whole life is a shaft of joyful experiences, which we rarely do, we are constantly in fear, thinking, 'Will this joy continue?' But the important thing that we forget is that we can neither break the shaft nor elongate it, because the shaft itself does not exist! The problem starts with our fantasies, whether they are driven by greed or fear. If we can accept reality, not just accept it, but welcome it, only then can we start living life.

All our desires and fears arise because, at the root, we feel that life has some goal, some purpose. Understand that life has no purpose. It has only meaning. Life has no goal; the path itself is the goal. Enjoy the path. Enjoy life as it comes. We think life is as we are living now. Understand that the way we are living life in our world of fantasies is actually like living in our dream world. Each of us has created a cocoon for ourselves, a web of desires, and we try to protect our false identity, our ego in this web. Only when we break out of the web, when we drop the ego, can we even see what life really is. Otherwise, we will only be projecting our imagination. When we realize the purposelessness of life, we can drop our desires and fears, we can plunge into reality, into the present and we can just watch our thoughts in a completely detached manner without connecting them.

The moment we decide to stay in the present, without the need to connect any thoughts with the past, the mind stops oscillating or flickering back and forth. When the mind does not flicker and stands still in the present moment, then we reach the state of 'no-mind'. In this state of 'no-mind,' we don't create any thought, we don't try to sustain any thought and we don't try to destroy any thought. If we relax from all these three things, then we will see that there will be no-mind.

Our mind is like a lake. When we throw a stone in a lake, many ripples will be created. If we want to stop these ripples, we cannot put our hand in the lake to try to smoothen out the ripples. This will only cause more ripples. This is what we end up doing when we try to still our minds. Instead if we just watch the lake, and ensure no more stones are thrown in, the ripples will disappear and the lake will become still. We try to control or still our minds by trying to destroy and suppress thoughts. We can never be successful this way. If we just relax and watch our mind with complete awareness, then no new thoughts will be created.

In India we say that god has three roles. The three roles are that of creator, sustainer and destroyer. Brahma is called the Creator or god of creation. Vishnu is known as the Sustainer or the god of maintenance. Shiva is called the Destroyer or the god of rejuvenation. With respect to our thoughts, when we stop performing these three roles of creation, sustenance and rejuvenation, when we transcend all these three, we become *Parabrahma* – supreme Self. When there are no new thoughts being created, sustained or destroyed, then the mind is absolutely still.

There is a beautiful story described in Bhagavatam, the story of the various incarnations of Vishnu, the Hindu god:

The demigods were oppressed by the demons and appealed to Lord Vishnu for help. According to His directions, the demigods were to churn the ocean of milk using the Mahā Meru mountain as the staff and Vasuki, the serpent, as the rope. During the churning, many products emerged out of the ocean of milk including an elephant, a horse, a divine chariot and many other divine things. Then, a deadly poison emerged, that threatened to take the lives of everyone. Shiva came to their rescue by consuming the poison Himself. He drank the poison but did not completely take it in. He just held it in His throat. That is why he is referred to as Neelakantha, the one with a blue throat.

This is actually a metaphysical representation. Life is like the churning of the ocean of milk where we are churned, pulled by desires and fear. We are pulled towards the desires and away from the fears. There are various products that emerge out of the churning (decisions and choices we make in life). Some of these products appear pleasing while others appear dangerous like poison. When we exist without taking in the poison or throwing it out, meaning without running towards the desires or running away from the fears, we become Shiva and live life blissfully, irrespective of what comes our way.

*Q: I find that on some days I can meditate well and on other days I cannot. How can I make sure that I am always successful in meditating well?*

The moment we start labeling meditation as good or bad, doing well or not so well, we start losing the whole meaning of meditation. Meditation is being in the present moment. There is nothing to define this experience by. We just are. That is all. There are people who insist on all kinds of conditions before they can meditate. Absolute silence is a requirement. Even the slightest noise will disturb them. All this is mere fuss.

A small story:

A man got upset that a neighbor living in the apartment above him came home late every night, making a lot of noise banging the doors and such things. What really bothered the man most was the way the neighbor dropped his shoes one after another, making a loud thud. All this woke him up, and then he could not go to sleep until the man was done with all the usual noise. After many such sleepless nights, he gathered some courage to confront his neighbour.

He told him not to make all that noise at night, and specifically not to drop his shoes. The neighbor politely apologized and that night moved about quietly when he came home. It became so quiet that the man beneath could not sleep! He was so used to being awakened by the banging door and the falling shoes. He was just waiting to hear the door bang. It did not happen. But suddenly one shoe dropped and nothing more. This guy was really tense and couldn't relax into sleep.

After waiting a few minutes, he shouted, 'Drop the other shoe and get it over with, you fool!'

If that is the attitude we take in meditation, we will be waiting for every sound to disturb us. Even if there is no sound, the sheer tension of waiting for a sound will take us away from the present moment. Remember, meditation does not make us deaf. In fact it makes us more sensitive. Meditation is about focusing inwards and including everything that happens around us. It is witnessing without getting involved in what happens outside, and even in our mind. We just witness our thoughts. We do not try to stop them, or get carried away by them.

If we try to capture any particular feeling while meditating, it will be a fruitless effort. Many people ask me, 'Swamiji, how can we hold on to the bliss of being

with you?’ The truth is that you cannot. The moment we try to hold it, bliss slips away. It is like holding our hands in flowing water. As long as our hands are open, the water will stay in them. The moment we try to hold that water by closing our hands, we will find that there is no water.

So just flow with your meditation. Be relaxed and be comfortable in your body. Focus on your breath without controlling it. Or use any other technique that you are comfortable with. Stop worrying about any experience you have had before, or one that you want to have now. Whatever experience you have is the right experience. Meditation has no goal. You cannot set target experiences. The process *is* the meaning of meditation. The experience is whatever you experience.





## Self Is Satisfied By The Self In The Self

*6.20 In yoga, the mind becomes quiet and the Self is satisfied by the Self in the Self.*

*6.21 Supreme bliss is grasped by intelligence transcending the senses.*

*The person who knows this is based in reality.*

*6.22 By attaining that Supreme, one does not consider any other gain as being greater. By being established in the Supreme, one is not shaken by the greatest misery.*

*6.23 When yoga is practiced with determination without deviating, the misery by contact with the senses is removed.*

*6.24 Giving up completely all the fantasies born of the mind, one can regulate all the senses from all the sides by the mind.*

Krishna talks about two important things, practice with determination and practice without deviating from the prescribed way. Both are key elements to experience yoga. After a few days of practice it is easy to fall into inertia, *tamas*, and give up. We fall back into our old ways and give up. Our mind has been programmed with our old routine for years. Naturally, our mind will draw us back to the old ways. This is where determination is needed. Determination driven by the curiosity and the quest to see and experience the truth is what will give us the energy to practice yoga.

The other important element is practice without deviating from the prescribed way. We (Nithyananda Mission) are re-introducing, re-presenting yoga in the form of Nithya Yoga, the yoga of eternity. I can say re-presenting because it is a new expression or teaching method. The method has evolved but the system, the truth itself is the same as the original system offered by the great master, Patanjali. His

system is so complete that we can't add even a single word to the techniques. It is the experience of Truth. Truth cannot be developed. Only lies can be developed. All we can do is help evolve the teaching of Truth to suit the current minds. The system itself cannot and need not be changed.

Krishna emphasizes here that yoga should be practiced in the prescribed way. All eight parts of yoga need to be practiced, but not in the eight steps as interpreted today. Even one part of Patanjali's Ashtaanga Yoga will take many lifetimes to achieve, given the modern man's mindset.

*Satya*, truth, is a part of *yama*, the first of the eight steps of Ashtānga Yoga. If we consistently practice truthfulness alone, we will reach *samādhi*, the state of liberation or enlightenment. The problem is that it is only in the enlightened state that one truly becomes truthful. Our thoughts, words and actions become pure and truthful only when we are enlightened. This is what Krishna means when He says, 'Self is satisfied by the Self in the Self.' All of this has to happen together, not part by part. When one aspect is fulfilled, all others also become fulfilled.

This is the state of *pūrṇa*, complete fulfillment. Nothing can be taken away from it. Nothing can be added to it that would make any difference to its state of completeness. No joy can make it more blissful, no sorrow can make it less blissful. One becomes centered in bliss. When centered in bliss, it is forever!

These days, yoga is no longer a spiritual quest. It is merely a form of commercial exploitation. It is a fashion statement, a fashion accessory. The people doing yoga and those teaching it don't even know what the true purpose of yoga is. We need to be able to say, 'I do yoga.' I believe in many parts of world, cosmetic surgery is accepted socially. Similarly, in some other parts, being a student of yoga sometimes becomes a necessary qualification for social acceptance.

So, today there is hot yoga, very hot yoga, temperate yoga, cold yoga, very cold yoga and so on. I saw a documentary some time ago by some professors from Harvard on Tibetan Buddhist monks being able to raise their body temperatures so much that the wet clothes they were wearing dried! These monks were sitting in the open, in the harsh Tibetan winter in sub-zero temperatures!

All these do not lead us anywhere near the truth. It is good business for those who conduct these programs. That is all. Very little can be gained spiritually by doing only the physical postures and breathing exercises. These may provide some physical health benefits in the short term if done carefully. But actually,

unregulated breathing exercises and physical contortions can do more harm than good.

Krishna talks about moving into reality, transcending the senses and the mind. The way yoga is taught and practiced in many places, one is moved away from reality into a fantasy world, to fulfill one's imagined needs. The senses and the mind wander aimlessly.

We cannot suppress desires, because anything suppressed will surface with more intensity. But going behind the desires is not the solution either. We might have experienced in our own lives, that a desire may be satisfied momentarily, but soon afterwards, it arises again. Instead we need to understand what is happening and how it is happening.

A small story:

Buddha had several thousand disciples whom He used to address every morning. One day, He brought a tightly knotted rope with Him and placed it before them and asked, 'Can someone untie this knot?'

Many disciples came and they tried pushing and pulling at the rope but the knot only became tighter.

Finally, one disciple came up, looked at the knot for a while, and then undid the knot.

We need to look at the knot and see how it has been created. Once we do that, we have to simply reverse the process of creating the knot, that's all. Instead of doing this, if we simply pull and push, we will never be able to untie the knot. It will only become tighter. The way out of the mind is also through the mind and not by avoiding it. Awareness is the key through which all our emotions can be handled. They basically originate from greed and fear. As we witness with awareness, the fear and greed lose their grasp on the mind.

Take fear for example. What do we do when we feel afraid of something, whether it is fear of insects or fear of heights? The moment we are faced with the object of fear, we try to escape. Have we tried facing the fear? The next time you are afraid, try this. Instead of running away, just try looking at the fear consciously with full awareness. Do not try to suppress it or run away from it. I tell you, when you look at fear with awareness, you will see that the fear does not exist as you thought it existed. It simply does not exist because fear is born out of ignorance,

when something is unknown to you. Because we don't know the object or situation fully, we fantasize about how it could be and how it could affect us, and build up what is called fear of it.

When we bring the light of knowledge upon fear, ignorance is removed and we get the courage to see the object as it is. Because now there is nothing hidden, our mind cannot fantasize about the unknown.

So understand, our fears are nothing but negative fantasies.

During one of our discussions one day, a girl jumped up when she saw a spider. I asked her why she was afraid of the spider. She replied she didn't know exactly why but she was always afraid of spiders since childhood. I told her to meditate on the spider every time she saw one. She followed this and every time she saw one, she looked at it with awareness and concentration. Slowly, she started wondering why she was scared of it after all, and her fear of spiders simply dropped on its own.

The same also applies to greed. Why do we always feel that we need more? We start running after the next desire before one desire is even fulfilled. We are so tuned to running after things. 'What next? What next?' becomes our chant. Have we ever stopped to think what we are running for? After fulfilling a desire, have we stopped to think whether we have achieved what we wanted? Have we stopped to enjoy what we just fulfilled? If we sit and contemplate sincerely over one desire after fulfilling it, by now, we would have gotten out of the vicious cycle of desires.

Can we ever drink water from a mirage? Running after the fantasies created by the mind is just like running after a mirage or running after the horizon. We can never achieve bliss by running behind these fantasies because these fantasies have no existence in reality.

*Q: Swamiji, we are ruled by fears and fantasies throughout our lives. Do they arise from the same source? You have said that we can eliminate fears by facing them. The problem is that we are too scared to face them. That is why the fears seem to continue. How can we overcome this problem?*

Fantasies arise from a blocked root center, the *mūlādhāra cakra*, and fears arise from a blocked spleen center, the *svādiṣṭhāna cakra*. Simply put, fantasies arise from

a sense of wanting, from a sense of possession arising from the feeling of 'mine', whereas fears originate from the potential loss of identity, the 'I'. All fears ultimately arise from a fear of losing one's identity or a loss to one's identity. Some of the greatest fears are those of death, public speaking, failure etc. In one form or another, these are all spaces where we feel that our identity may be lost. It may be a physical loss as in death, or loss of reputation as in public speaking or loss of material possessions as in failures.

We have no fears when we are fully confident about doing something. We also have no fears when we have no hopes of being able to do something! Most of us will not have fears of not being able to climb a mountain, as we probably don't have the skill to do it. But to a seasoned mountain climber the fear of not being able to climb Mount Everest or some such peak may be very real, affecting his status and reputation.

The fear of losing a million dollars is irrelevant to someone who has only a few thousands, but very real to a multimillionaire. So, how does he face that fear? Such a person can face the fear by deliberately imagining the worst-case scenario of losing all his wealth. If the visualization is strong enough, the experience will be real too. The person may go through trauma with just the visualization, but once the experience is over, he can be sure that he can face any possible loss with great equanimity.

Many people, especially women, are afraid of reptiles, insects and such things. These are fears that are deeply rooted in the unconscious brain. As I described in the case of the girl who was afraid of spiders, the solution is to visualize or meditate on that fear. There are guided meditations that will help. In general, in order for a fear to drop, it has to be faced.

In our first level meditation program, participants go through a guided meditation to remove fears. This meditation helps us overcome the fear of death or the separation of the spirit from the mind-body system. Done under controlled conditions, this helps us face the fear of death and gives us the ability to cope with that fear better. If our fear is deeply rooted and we find it difficult to face it ourselves, these courses and these meditations can help a lot. As I said, all fears are ultimately about death. Once we understand that death itself is not an end but a passage, the fear of death can be dissolved. Along with that, many of our other fears born out of the fear of loss of identity will also dissolve.



## Be In The Self And See The Supreme

*6.25 Gradually, step-by-step, one should become established in the Self, held by the conviction of intelligence, with the mind not thinking of anything else.*

*6.26 From wherever the mind becomes agitated due to its wandering and unsteady nature, from there, one must certainly bring it under the control of the Self.*

*6.27 The **yogi** whose mind is peaceful attains the highest happiness; his passion is pacified and he is free from sins as he is liberated by the Supreme.*

*6.28 The yogi always engaged in the Self and free from material contamination is in touch with the Supreme and attains the highest happiness.*

*6.29 The yogi sees the Supreme established in all beings and also all beings situated in the Supreme.*

*One established in the Self sees the Supreme everywhere.*

Here Krishna says that we need conviction and intelligence to be established in the Self. Why does He talk about conviction? Understand that intelligence cannot happen without a strong conviction, a strong intellectual base. That is why our eastern sages have given us the treasure of the *śāstras*, the foundation of knowledge. Our *vedic* seers have created *śāstras*, scriptures that give the intellectual understanding, conviction and commitment to this process. Logically, we will be clear about the questions that naturally arise. 'What is the path? What is the goal? Why do we need spirituality?' All these questions are answered logically. All these

major questions are answered intellectually in the *śāstras*. The conclusions are given to us. We need to understand a few things about the *śāstras*. *Śāstras* are the scriptures that take away all our doubts completely.

*saṁśaya rākśasa nāshana astram*

It means *saṁśaya* is a *rākśasa* - 'doubt is a devil'. Once a doubt enters our mind, until we clear it, we can't sleep, we can't rest. The *śāstras* help us get rid of these doubts intellectually. Unless we have complete intellectual clarity, even if we believe, our belief will be a pseudo belief. Please be very clear that our belief will be a pseudo belief. Anyone can shake our faith. Our faith will not have a strong base. Our faith will be like a building without a foundation. If we build without a foundation, what will happen to the building? The same thing will happen to us if we don't have the base of *śāstras*.

Somebody asked Vivekananda, 'What is the importance of *Vedas* and why should we study the *śāstras*?'

Vivekananda said, 'If you study the *śāstras*, all your faith, all your sincerity will become so strong, nobody can shake your faith and sincerity.'

Otherwise, any fool can tell us that what we are doing is superstitious and we will start thinking about it, we will start questioning ourselves, 'Am I really doing superstitious things? What am I doing?' We will start having doubts about ourselves. We won't believe our faith. It will not be solid enough.

Please understand that we don't really believe our belief. We may think that we believe something. We may think we have faith, but our faith or belief can be cunningly shallow. It will not be very deep unless we have the foundation of intellectual conviction. Unless we have the deep foundation of the *śāstras*, we will not be able to believe anything. Our emotions are not deep, our faith is not deep, because we don't have intellectual conviction. A man who doesn't have intellectual conviction and has just faith, can be shaken by anybody. *Śāstras* give us the intellectual understanding, give us a base so that all our convictions, all our faith, all our beliefs can enter into our being and start working.

If we see all the great devotees of the Lord - Chaitanya, Ramanuja, Madhva - all of them had a very strong intellectual base. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was a great philosopher of logic. Once we reach the height and peak of logic, only then can we fall into the valley of love. Only then are we qualified to fall in love. Unless we reach the heights of logic, we are not qualified to fall in the valley of love, the valley of devotion.

One more thing that you should know is that there are different ways to learn and develop conviction. We can learn from our experiences as well as from others' experiences. For example, when we touch the flame of a candle, we learn that it burns. When we touch a burning gas stove, we learn again that fire burns. One by one, we can experience and learn that all fires burn. Or, when we touch the first form of fire, immediately we can learn that all fires will burn! Coming to a conclusion and a clear understanding that all fires burn, after just one experience, is intelligence!

We need a strong conviction for spirituality to flower in our lives. Only then can we stay on the path without faltering. If we do anything with knowledge about the science of the whole action, then the activity becomes a meditation.

When the science is lost and only the activity remains, it becomes a ritual. When the juice of wisdom is not in the activity, it becomes a ritual, and we become religious nuts. When we add the juice of wisdom, we become spiritual fruits! When we commit an act without knowing the science behind it, we make that activity a ritual. We need to add 'spirit' to the 'ritual'. Then it becomes 'spirituality'!

We can start with simple things. We can try to infuse awareness into simple actions in our everyday life like eating, having a bath, driving. Gradually, when the awareness extends to more actions and to more moments of our life, we can see that such awareness results in bliss because we are living more in the present moment. Only in the present can we experience that our true nature is bliss. All our other emotions exist only because of our ignorance.

We need to bring the light of awareness into everything we do. This state of complete awareness that can be practiced in every one of our daily activities comes out of a deep internal conviction. It is a conviction arising out of our innate intelligence and understanding that we must return to our true nature, our true nature that is divinity.

Krishna is emphasizing an important spiritual quality, perseverance. In the previous verse, He spoke about conviction. Now, he talks about persevering with that conviction. What happens most of the time to most of us is that when we realize we need to change, we try a few times and then give up thinking we cannot do it. Naturally, when we have been living for years in a certain way, the habit becomes embedded in our mind. We expect the mental setup that we have created and solidified, to be broken and restructured in a few attempts, almost instantly. How is this possible? We need to be more patient and persevere in our efforts for the real change to happen.



So what if we fail sometimes? Why don't we look at the positive side and see that we succeeded a few times as well? Naturally, when we start trying we will be aware and successful a few times and we will be unaware a few other times. Why do we want to count the failures and feel depressed? We can also look at the successes and feel inspired. That is a much smarter approach!

Once the conviction is there, what can stop us from breaking free of the old mental setup? Nothing can stop us except our own mind. The mind is like a faithful servant. It reproduces whatever it has been fed. All along, we have been feeding the mind negative memories of failure and we have been storing all the past memories related to failure. What will the mind reproduce? It will recollect and present the same instances of only failure. When we want to measure the strength of a chain, we measure the strength of the weakest link in that chain. Based on the strength of that link, we know the strength of the entire chain. But we cannot apply the same logic to measure ourselves.

When we measure our lives based on our weakest moments, we make a big mistake. When we measure ourselves based on our failures, based on our low energy moments, we take a wrong reading of ourselves. We cannot do with our lives what we do with the chain.

Why can't we give credit to ourselves for the strong moments, for the successful moments of our lives? We have been conditioned by society to consider ourselves weak beings. We have been taught to feel that we are not complete. We have been taught to feel guilty. The more we remember negative decisions or mistakes, the more guilt we create for ourselves. Does that help us in any way? No! It only creates low energy. We should just decide that we will not be trapped in this cycle of guilt and desire.

We need to measure ourselves by our strongest moments, our greatest moments, moments when we have displayed extraordinary awareness, courage, compassion, love and such other divine qualities. These are the moments when we have truly come into our own. We have shown to ourselves what we can achieve if we try. A human being is the sum of his greatest moments. He is not a mechanical device that fails based on its faults. He is a spiritual being who thrives on his strengths.

One more thing that you should understand is that you attract 'like' incidents in your life. 'Like attracts like.' I'm sure you have heard this before. The energy of one frequency attracts the similar frequency. When we are angry, the low energy attracts similar low energy. Pain attracts pain. Joy attracts joy. Bliss attracts fortune. If we are joyful, we will create joyful people around us. We will create a beautiful

community around us. We will create a blissful group around us. If we are suffering and if we are depressed, then naturally we will attract only that type of people around us. It is for us to decide what we want to attract.

For example, when we tune our television to the CNN channel we see the programs on that channel. When we tune the television to some other channel, we see some other program. In the same way, if we tune our mind to a positive attitude and to positive things and sincerely welcome that level of energy, we start attracting positive situations and people. We start meeting blissful friends and start creating blissful situations. We start creating a blissful life.

We must persevere in our efforts to change our attitude and we will see the results in front of our very eyes. Failures are merely tests to verify our mettle. Irrespective of how many times we may fail, with complete faith we can believe in that inner strength that we all possess. Then we shall succeed. This is what is meant when Krishna says the true *yogi* reaches the state of ultimate happiness, the state of eternal bliss and divine consciousness by his identification with the Absolute.

In the next verse, Krishna talks about passion and sins. Passion is nothing but a deep attachment to something for the pleasure that it gives. Usually we associate passion, sin and such terms with deeds that we classify as right or wrong. But here, Krishna does not talk about sin in the way society teaches us. It is not morality that He is talking about. I tell you, there is no sin except the sin of connecting thoughts and thinking that we are logical beings. That is the original sin. Not understanding that thoughts are independent and disconnected is the original sin.

When we are in ignorance, when we are unaware, we commit sin because we are not aware of what we are doing. So the key is to be aware every moment. The solution is not to condemn ourselves as sinners and expect to be redeemed by some external force. It is we who choose everything in our lives and how we want to live. But since we do not participate in this process with awareness, we call it 'fate'. We are the ones who commit the actions, but we don't want to accept that fact when we get the results.

A small story:

Once a lady entered the registrar's office. She was very angry and slammed the door behind her.

On seeing the registrar she demanded, 'Were you not the one who issued this license for me to marry my boyfriend?'

The registrar checked the document carefully and said, 'Yes, madam. I did. Why?'

The lady replied, 'Because he has escaped. Now, what are you going to do?'

Somehow we choose to do whatever we want to do and then blame everyone else for the consequences!

When we infuse awareness into our actions, automatically the very awareness will ensure that we do the right things. We don't need to depend on society and morality to teach us the right things to do.

I tell you, conscience is a very poor substitute for consciousness. Live according to your intelligence and awareness and you won't have to depend on others to figure out what to do and how to do it. If you depend on others, even after becoming an adult, it means you are not mature. Anything done out of conscience can only be superficial. It does not have the conviction of experience to back it. That is why it is never done whole-heartedly, because your energy, your intelligence is not behind the action. It may have been somebody else's experience but you have not experienced it fully.

Once a man came and asked me, '*Swamiji*, I know I should do certain things but I am not able to do them when I need to. For example, the other day, I was traveling in a bus and an old man got onto the bus. I knew I should get up and offer my seat to the man. But I started to think that I myself had such a long way to go and that if I got up, I would feel tired after some time. I just thought about it and couldn't get myself to get up and give my seat to the old man. Later I felt guilty about it.'

I told him, 'It is because you have not had the deep experience of joy when you give your seat to another person. The joy has not become your experience. Even if you have given your seat before, you have given it half-heartedly. Now, try doing the same act with an attitude of experimentation, thinking, 'Let me try this. Let me see how it feels.' Try doing it as an experiment, with complete involvement, not with the greed of earning a good name or feeling good about yourself. Just do the action with the curiosity of a child.'

Have you seen a child doing anything, like looking at a flower? A child will look at a flower not just with its eyes, but also with its entire body. The eyes will look at the flower with awe and curiosity. The hands will feel the flower and the nose will enjoy the smell of the flower. A child does anything and everything completely, with curiosity about life. Its whole body will be completely involved in

any action. We should try to look at life and all that we do in life in a similar way. Many of us have not experienced the joy of serving someone whole-heartedly. On the other hand, if we are smokers, do we need somebody to convince us to smoke? No! Smoking has become our experience. That is why we don't need to depend on somebody else to convince us about it.

All these things follow each other: when we are in bliss or the highest happiness, we can never commit any sin because we are aware and conscious and we cannot be caught in passion or lethargy. When we are in a 'no-mind' state we are in bliss, and we are not caught in the passion or sin that are products of the mind. When the mind subsides, the divine hand that is orchestrating every single event will guide every one of our actions.

What does it mean to be freed from all past sinful reactions? Our past reactions are nothing but our past memories along with the associated emotions, deeply inscribed in our unconscious zone. One thing to understand is that a reaction is different from a response. A reaction to anything is always due to our past memories. If our action is based on any past event, concept, notion or memory then we are merely reacting to an event or incident or person. You see, there are two things; collecting arguments and forming a judgment and already making a judgment and then collecting arguments to support it. The second is what we do most of the time.

We can see in our own lives how many times this has happened and we may not even have noticed. Our son comes home late from school one day and we have already formed a negative judgment as to why he could be late. We decide that he is in bad company or he has gone to some movie. When he comes back, we are ready with our judgment based on some incident in the past and we are not even open to listen to him. As soon as he walks through the door our tone and actions become accusing. Perhaps he stayed back to study in the library but we are not ready to accept this. We have already formed our judgment.

Whenever we hold on to any past incidents or emotions, our actions are bound to be impacted by them. On the other hand, if our action is not based on the past but arises from a spontaneous decision based on the present situation, then we are 'responding' to the event or incident or person. When we are in bliss, our actions will be only a response and not be based on these past memories that Krishna calls past sinful reactions.

Have the courage to make decisions without referring to these past incidents, because every single incident and every single moment is a brand new one. How

can we compare what is happening now with what happened before? The situation is different, the person is different and so are we. Every moment, each one of us is dying and being born again; we are changing. Our intelligence is being constantly updated. Then how can we analyze the present situation through the lens of the past? We must give up all regrets and guilt that we might have about the past, and immerse ourselves in the present moment. We don't need the past to live beautifully in the present. In fact, we can't live blissfully in the present if we continue to use the past as a reference point for how to manage our lives.

Krishna says that the realized person sees the Supreme in everyone and everything. He sees everything situated in the Supreme and all beings situated in the Supreme. The yogi is in touch with the higher Self and is in bliss. When we experience the Truth, we see everything in ourselves and ourselves in everything. In fact, in my first spiritual experience at the age of twelve, this is what I clearly saw.

When I was twelve, I was playing with this technique of just watching where thoughts came from. At that age, I didn't even realize it was meditation. One day, at the foothills of Arunachala, in my hometown of Tiruvannamalai in South India, I was sitting on a rock, just playing with this technique that I had been practicing for two years. Suddenly, something happened; something opened within me. I felt as if I was being pulled inside. Suddenly, I could see 360 degrees in all directions. My eyes were closed but I could see everything in front of me and behind me. Not just that, I felt that whatever I was seeing was all me. I could see myself in everything - in the trees, in the rocks, in the ground, in the hills, everything!

An enlightened person sees no difference between himself and the rest of the universe. He is one with the universe. His boundary does not end where his physical body ends. In fact, now with Kirlian photography, we can even check the auric body. For ordinary people, the aura just surrounds the physical body but when you are one with the universe, the aura extends infinitely. The *viśvarūpa darshan* (vision of the cosmic form) that Krishna gives Arjuna is the glimpse of the same Truth, where Arjuna sees that Krishna is one with the universe.

Through Quantum Physics studies, the scientific community has come to the conclusion that everything in the universe is energy. In fact, this is the first line in the *Upaniṣad* that was given by our *vedic* seers thousands of years ago. The very first line of *Īśā Vāśya Upaniṣad* says, '*īśā vāśyaṁ idaṁ sarvaṁ*,' all that exists is energy. All our minds are not individually separate pieces of the universe. They are all one and the same. All our minds are interlinked. Not only interlinked, they directly affect each other. This is what I call collective consciousness.

In the ultimate sense, at the spiritual level, the moment we understand that we are deeply connected, totally and intensely connected to the whole group, to the whole universe, not only do we start experiencing bliss, we really start living. Many dimensions of our being start opening. Right now we are stressed out and disturbed continuously because we think of ourselves as individual egos. If we disappear into this collective consciousness, we will experience so many dimensions and so many possibilities that we simply cannot imagine right now!

Then, we see an enlightened master, we understand how all-encompassing he is. He never excludes anything or anyone. He sees no imperfections in anyone. He is just pure love, that's all. And pure love sees no imperfections. When we see every human being as a part of god, then that is real worship. It is easy to worship god in the temple. Real worship is seeing everything as god, seeing our neighbor as god. Existence is pure love.

Society is always against pure love. Deep inside, society is actually against Existence or god. The best way not to follow anything is to start worshipping it. Society escapes in the name of worship.

Society will never approve of us if we were to let go and love every plant and animal with endless love. It will tell us that we are mad. It will approve only of societal love, love that is governed by give and take, love that comes with a reason or motive, no matter how subtle. But I tell you, we must keep on loving with all our hearts, and expand to see Existence in everything.

The root of god is love. The root of god lies in seeing Him in everything. People are afraid to go to the roots and so they delude themselves in superficial layers. They don't have the courage to explore with anything beyond a certain point in life. Have the courage to go deep inside and love. We will start feeling the common thread of Existence in all that we see. We will understand that all that we see are illusory happenings held together by the real thread that is Existence. Automatically we will start loving everything in the same way without any trouble because we will see only Existence in everyone and everything. Each and every atom in this earth is unique, is divine, and is an expression of Existence.

*Q: Swamiji, you said bliss attracts fortune. How does this work? Normally, we believe that if we are rich we can become happy. Are you saying that by being happy we can become wealthy?*

Yes. I am saying exactly that. Bliss does attract fortune. By being happy you do become wealthy.

Whatever state we are in, we attract people who are in a similar state. If we keep complaining all the time, the only people who will stay with us are those who complain themselves. So, we work out a schedule amongst ourselves that one complains for one hour, then the second takes over, and then a third and so on. By complaining about everything in this world we make ourselves more miserable and make others also more miserable. This is a vicious cycle.

However, when we express joy and look at the positive aspects of things, we will share that joy with everyone and everything around us. Then it is joy that increases and not misery. When we are happy, we are thinking positive thoughts. But the problem that most people have is that when they try to think positively, the positivity is only skin deep. There is a huge mass of negativity that is buried underneath that they are not even conscious about. However positively one thinks, unless the negativities are removed, there will be nothing good happening. It won't last.

Bliss does not happen with mere positive thinking. It is much more deeply seated and permanent. Bliss happens when all of our negativities dissolve. Bliss happens when our deeply rooted *saṃskāras*, the engraved memories that are stored in our unconscious, dissolve. These *saṃskāras* influence all our thoughts, decisions and actions. When we are free of these emotion-laden memories, we are able to look at all that happens around us dispassionately, without being affected by emotion. By dispassionate, I don't mean dull and lifeless. I mean looking with maturity and calmness, without being emotionally drawn into the dramas going on around us. Bliss does not mean jumping like a clown all the time or being caught on the roller coaster ride of emotions. Bliss is a state beyond joy and sorrow, where neither has meaning or effect. It is an intense, life affirming energy. It is unimaginable and worth every effort to achieve it.

Bliss means it will not be the same when it happens a second time. If we already accidentally felt bliss, when it happens for the second time it will not be same. If it is the same, it won't be bliss. Bliss means new. *Nitya* means eternal. Eternal does not mean old. Understand, eternal does not mean old. Eternal means 'present'. We need to understand this important and basic truth. So we can't give any example of the bliss happening. If it repeats it will never be bliss. It is just pleasure. Anything we try to reproduce again through the same path, the same method, will only be pleasure, never bliss.

Meditation leads us to newer and newer moments of bliss. It is not reproducing the same moments of bliss. That is only trying to reproduce the past from a memory. That can never be bliss. It will never be the same. It will always be new. So we can't give an example. If I can give any example I would have started a shop, The Bliss Shop. We can't, that is the problem. When we are in this state of bliss, we are in tune with our true nature and we are merged in cosmic consciousness. We become Existence. Abundance is the nature of Existence. Therefore, we attract abundance and fortune.





## Controlling The Wavering Mind

*6.30 For one who sees Me everywhere and who sees everything in Me, for him I am never lost nor is he lost to Me.*

*6.31 He who is in oneness with Me in all respects, worships Me situated in all beings and remains present in Me.*

*6.32 One who can feel the happiness or misery of others equally as he can feel his own happiness and misery is the supreme yogi in My opinion, O Arjuna.*

*6.33 Arjuna said: O Madhusudhana, I am not able to see this system of yoga as told by You, owing to the mind being restless and not steady.*

*6.34 O Krishna, the wavering mind is agitated, strong and firm. I think it is difficult to control the mind like it is difficult to control the wind.*

*6.35 The Lord said: O mighty-armed son of Kunti, it is undoubtedly difficult to control the wavering mind but by practice and detachment, it can be controlled.*

Here, Krishna gives a promise. He says that for anyone who sees Him in everything and who sees everything in Him, He is always available. What He means is not that we should see the form of Krishna in everyone, with the flute and two peacock feathers. Of course, that form is beautiful but do not get caught in the form. The form is there one day and not there the next; it is ephemeral. It is like this: if my finger is pointing in the direction of the moon, look in the direction of the moon and enjoy its beauty. Instead, if you watch my finger, you will miss the moon!

What Krishna means by 'Me' is the Krishna energy, the divine consciousness. See the Divine in everybody and everything and automatically, you will relax. You will no longer fight because you will see everything around you as a part of the Divine,

including yourself. What is there to fight with and what should you fight for? You will simply relax.

Existence is waiting with open arms to engulf us, to dissolve us into Itself, but only if we are ready to let go. If we just have the courage to let go with an open heart, we will meet and merge with it. When we are ready to feel the embrace of Existence, we rise into a higher plane, a plane of higher consciousness. We enter into a space we never even knew existed. With Existence we always fall in to rise.

People ask me, 'How can we tell that you are the right master for us?'

I tell them simply, 'Forget about any analysis or any intellectual reasoning. If I am truly your master, you can never forget me. I will be there even in your dreams!' The relationship between a master and a disciple is one of pure love. When we are truly in love, we see the object of love in everything around us. We are consumed by that feeling. The master fills every pore of our being. We never need to ask, 'Are you my master?' We just know! He has filled our being, touched us at our core, because to him, there is no separation. Here, Krishna is describing the state of the enlightened person. An enlightened person can empathize with everyone because he experiences himself as everyone.

An incident from the life of Vivekananda:

One night, Vivekananda woke up at two a.m. and woke up his disciples. His disciples were anxious and wanted to know what was happening. Vivekananda said that he was feeling a lot of pain and that in some part of the world there was a natural calamity happening that was causing him the pain. The next morning, the newspapers carried the news of a terrible earthquake in Fiji Islands that consumed many lives. Vivekananda was sensitive to a calamity that happened in some corner of the world thousands of miles away!

What happened in Vivekananda is what we call empathy. It is not sympathy.

Sympathy is a very superficial word. We are all capable of sympathy. When someone tells us that they are suffering, we make some noises and just confirm their suffering for them. That is sympathy. When we sympathize, we affirm to them that their worries are big, so we actually give them a subtle ego boost.

What an enlightened person or a master feels is never sympathy. It is empathy. Empathy is when we feel another's suffering in our own being. It is when a person does not have to tell us he is suffering, but we simply know because the Existential

energy in us feels it. Masters are one with us because they are one with Existence and we are a part of Existence. It is only that we see them as separate. In reality that is not the case.

When we realize the sense of oneness with the entire universe, we experience a tremendous overflowing of love and compassion for every being without discrimination, because we realize that everyone is a part of the same Whole. That is why we can see that masters are such an ocean of infinite love and know only how to give. They are Existence itself. They shower love without asking questions because they feel a constant devotion towards the entire universe or life force or *Parabrahma* Krishna. They are one with Existence and cannot see anyone as a separate entity because there is no separateness.

It is only our senses, mind and logic that perceives information and categorizes it and analyzes it to create the separateness. As long as we use our logic, our collected information, words and our little dictionaries to analyze the information received through our senses, we will be excluding and judging. Existence or the universe is a living energy with infinite potential and is simply beyond our logic. Only when we drop our logic, mind and ego can we merge with Existence and become whole and start seeing that everyone and everything is an extension of the same life force with just different expressions.

Just as the fingers on the hand and the toes on the feet belong to the same body, we will be able to see that everyone is a part of the same universal energy. This is when true compassion, empathy and service towards everyone can happen. Until then we will only be using our logic, mind, ego and conditioning, to serve others.

When we realize the oneness, we will express our unconditional love and compassion towards everyone without discrimination, because we know that all discrimination is baseless and false. Our very walk and talk will start radiating so much bliss that our very presence will start healing others. We will become a blessing for planet Earth. We will become a blessing for people who experience our presence.

There are a few disciples who have internalized me so much, imbibed me in them so much that they express me in everything that they do. People who come to the ashram are amazed to see these people who walk like me and talk like me. Some people think that these disciples are doing it to show off. No, they are so much in tune with me that they reflect my body language in them. My presence is in them.

Krishna goes further to explain the state of an enlightened person or a person who is one with the divine consciousness. He says that the enlightened person will feel equally the happiness and pain of another person as he feels his own. Such a person feels one with the whole world. For him, everything is a part of him, so there is nothing else other than his own self. His boundary does not end with the boundary of his own physical body. What does Krishna mean when He says that the enlightened person feels happiness and distress equally in himself and in others? First, he said that the enlightened person is beyond the opposites, the dualities, beyond the opposing emotions of happiness and distress.

It is like this, say there are two trees in a forest. Now, if one tree falls on the other, we can say that the tree on which the other tree has fallen feels the impact, the weight or the pain of a tree falling on it. Now, say the tree actually feels the entire forest as a part of its own self. Can we say that it will feel 'another' tree falling on it? When everything is a part of its own self, where is the idea of 'other'? When the idea of 'other' disappears, then where is the pain? The idea of pain is relative, in relation with the 'other'. The enlightened person is just immersed in enjoying Existence. No separate identities or judgments about right or wrong, happiness or misery exist. These terms and concepts exist only as long as one feels separate.

A *yogi* in the state of super-consciousness will just watch everything in Existence without judging or labeling it. He will be in a state of complete celebration of life. Existence is love. It is only love and nothing else. Yet, the compassion of the *yogi*, the master, is such that he feels the experiences that others undergo and he empathizes with them. The master's state of equanimity is not disturbed and yet he feels the pain and joy of others.

This expression of collective consciousness is what Krishna has described elsewhere as *vasudaiva kutumbakam*. It means that the world is our family and we should feel for the rest of the world as we would for our immediate family. When we exist in this state of consciousness, we are true *yogis*.

Arjuna introduces the word 'difficult' here. Be very clear, the moment we categorize something as easy or difficult, we have made it that way. People ask me, 'Swamiji, is *brahmacharya* difficult?' I tell them, it is neither easy nor difficult. It is just a way of life. Even if we say it is easy, it means it is a little difficult!

For example, now I am sitting here. Can we say that this sitting is easy or difficult? If I had arthritis, sitting would be difficult. On the other hand, if I were standing for a long time, sitting would be easy. This is just comparative reality. In the same way, stilling the mind, yoga, is also a way of being. When we complicate

things by using words, we make it difficult for ourselves, just to fulfill our ego. Understand that the ego can be fulfilled only through difficult things. Simple things cannot satisfy the ego.

After listening to Krishna about controlling the mind, Arjuna expresses his doubts about being able to still the mind. We have to understand here that he is talking for not only the other people of his time, he is actually asking about problems that will be faced by future generations also. We all have this question in our minds, this doubt in our minds. Arjuna's question is not just an individual's question. His question is the question faced by each and every one of us, irrespective of our age, gender, social structure or culture.

People ask me, 'Why is the Gita relevant even today?' Because the questions asked by Arjuna are the same questions that we ask today and the answers of Krishna are relevant even today. The questions are the fundamental quest of the individual and the answers are the eternal Truth. The Truth is neither old nor new; it is eternal. Krishna, the energy and His teachings are the timeless Truths. The doubt that Arjuna has raised is even more applicable to the modern man. In the present age, there is so much competition, materialism and so much exposure to fantasies through the media. We have become more complex than our forefathers because of this cerebral layer that has formed with all the fantasies bombarding us from all directions.

The problem is that we are not ready to spend some time or do simple, practical techniques in the inner world because we are so caught up in the outer world, driven by fear and greed. We are in a constant rat race. Arjuna cannot understand how to practice yoga, given the unsteady and wavering nature of the mind. Five thousand years ago, even though there was no infiltration by television, magazines and media on the scale that we have now, Arjuna expressed his doubt about how to handle the mind.

Here, Arjuna addresses to Krishna his concerns about the mind being so strong and obstinate that it sometimes overcomes the intelligence. We saw in the beginning of this chapter how we make illogical decisions based on our *samskāras* or engraved memories. It is our unconscious zone and our lack of awareness about this that causes our mind to implement illogical decisions. It is only when we understand why we make illogical decisions that we can find ways to stop making these kinds of decisions. The first and foremost thing is to accept that we have a problem. The next thing is to understand how the problem is created. That is what Arjuna does here. It is only then that we can overcome the problem. If we ignore or run away from the problem we can never resolve the problem.

So the first thing to accept is that our mind does flicker and oscillate. Accepting and being aware is different from judging whether it is easy or difficult to control the mind. We then need to understand how it flickers or oscillates. For this we need to watch the mind. This is meditation. The very act of watching and being aware of the mind will take us beyond the mind.

Here, Krishna has to answer from the same plane that Arjuna asks the question. Arjuna says that the mind is wavering and difficult to control. Just as one thorn is used to remove another thorn, Krishna has to give Arjuna a technique. He has to give something to the mind that has created the problem. He has to support the idea that it is difficult to control the mind. So Krishna has to give some technique at this point - practice and detachment. Now, if He tells Arjuna that this problem is not a problem at all but a creation of his mind, Arjuna will not understand. Krishna has to give a technique for the mind to play with.

Masters give meditation techniques so that we try all these and ultimately realize we are bliss, and that meditation is our natural state, and that there is nothing to be achieved. But, if I tell you that right away, you will not believe me. The mind cannot believe something so simple. It will create all kinds of contradictions as to why it cannot be so simple. Krishna also has to give a solution for the questioning mind. He emphasizes perseverance and penance. Don't think penance means leaving home, going to the Himalayas and sitting in meditation while fasting. Penance is persevering with conviction until we experience the Truth.

Krishna also reveals the root of the problem of controlling the mind and gives the technique to solve it, which is detachment. Here we need to understand the word 'detachment'. Whether we say ego or mind, it is just the collection of thoughts. Thoughts can exist only in relationship to our identity and the past or the future.

In the present, we cannot have thoughts because the moment we think, that very moment, the present has slipped into the past. The present is constantly slipping into the past. The mind moves only because it is attached to the past or the future. The mind is constantly driven by fear and greed related to our identity. Either we fear losing the carefully constructed identity we have created for ourselves or we are greedy to develop a better image of ourselves in our own eyes and in the eyes of society. We create two identities, one that we project to ourselves and one that we project to the outer world. The mind is in constant fear and greed about maintaining and developing these identities.

The mind becomes so attached to these identities that it is constantly reviewing the past incidents that helped or hurt these identities or it is constantly planning the

future to either protect or develop these identities. This constant pre-occupation of the mind with the past and future is the root cause of the oscillation and movement of the mind. The mind is always in such constant preparation that it never rests and never lets us stay in the present moment. If we look deeply, staying in the present moment means total insecurity. It requires us to be ready to embrace the present without planning for the future or reviewing the past. There is no security for our identity. This seems like a great danger for our ego, our carefully constructed identity. The mind is not prepared for that.

If we look deeply, we will realize that our identities are nothing but a collection of opinions and ideas from society and people around us. All that we are trying to do in maintaining this ego is trying to carefully run our lives according to these opinions and ideas. It is as if we are constantly walking a tightrope. The pole in our hands is our ego and the rope is the path and framework laid out by society. We are constantly trying to get the applause of the audience, society.

This false image that we have constructed about ourselves is the root cause of all misery. I tell you, any identity that we create about ourselves that is less than the idea of our being god, is a false identity. If we consider ourselves to be anything less than god, we suffer from an inferiority complex. If we have the courage to detach ourselves from the certificates of society, if we have the courage to drop these false identities about ourselves, then we can embrace the Divine. Detachment is the direct technique that Krishna is suggesting here. Detachment at the root level will lead to detachment from everything else. Detachment from the ego or the identities will lead to detachment from desires. This is detachment from the past and future. This is being 'unclutched'.

***Q: Respected Swamiji, committed one asks: which key is of greatest importance in getting rid of attachment?***

Beautiful question! Especially the phrase 'committed one asks'. This way I can give an honest answer. Questions can always be answered in two ways, the socially polite answer and the honest answer. Here I can give an honest answer because the question says, 'committed one asks'. That means she is going to go back and follow what I say. If the person is not ready to follow, I can give just comforting answers like, 'Don't worry, just pray to God.' It is very easy to give a socially polite answer. But here I will give the real answer.

The one and only key to get rid of attachment is meditation or looking in. All our intellectual analysis can only give us courage but it cannot give us the solution. The one and only way to get rid of attachment is meditation. Meditation is the one and only key. Meditation leads us into the present moment. It leads us into a thoughtless state. Thoughts are nothing but the movement of our mind from past to future and future to past. Our mind keeps moving back and forth like a pendulum. Neither the past nor the future is real. In the past we have regrets for things not done and in the future we have speculations and fantasies that we hope will come true. Both lead to attachment. To go beyond attachment, to go beyond fantasies and regrets, the only way is to shift to the present moment. Only the present moment is real. Meditation alone helps us reach here.

As Krishna says, we need to practice meditation. It is not something we do once in a while and hope that miracles will happen. Meditation needs to become a way of life. Our Nithya Spiritual Healers are initiated into the *ānanda gandha* meditation technique which can be a way of life. This meditation can be practiced all the time. With it you can be in the present moment all the time. You can stay detached all the time.





## Where Do I Go Without Yoga?

*6.36 For one whose mind is uncontrolled, it is difficult to attain yoga in My opinion.*

*But, it is practical to achieve control over the mind by appropriate means.*

*6.37 Arjuna said: O Krishna, if a person is engaged in yoga with faith but does not attain yoga because of the wavering mind, what destination does he achieve?*

*6.38 O mighty-armed Krishna, does the person who deviated from the path perish, torn like a cloud without any position?*

*6.39 This is my doubt, O Krishna and I request You to dispel it completely. Certainly, there is no one to be found other than You who can remove this doubt.*

*6.40 The Lord said: O son of Pritha, the person engaged in activities for good does not meet with destruction either in this world or the next life; he never faces degradation.*

Krishna continues to declare in this verse that it is possible to achieve Self-realization by stilling the mind if one intensely practices the appropriate techniques. Here, Krishna explains that it is possible to achieve control over the mind. He says that it is possible to stay in that state where we are in control of the mind.

Actually, having an experience of *satori* or the first glimpse of bliss is not a big thing. It is easy to get a taste of enlightenment. But to stay in that same state, the same space, the same consciousness, needs preparation of the body and mind. To express that high energy through the body and to radiate that experience of bliss requires that our body and mind be prepared. Preparing the body and mind for enlightenment is what yoga is all about. This is what sage Patanjali created yoga for.

The problem is that only the verbal language of Patanjali remains, but the body language is absent. What Patanjali wanted to convey is not there. Only the words are there. That is why so much confusion and mutated forms of yoga are around today.

How much can words convey? Only a person in the same space, in the same consciousness as Patanjali can convey what he wanted to convey. This is what Nithya Yoga is all about. It is yoga taught by an enlightened being who can convey the body language of Patanjali, the experience of Patanjali, because he is in the same consciousness as Patanjali. The whole purpose of Nithya Yoga is to prepare the body to experience, stay in and radiate eternal bliss. Its purpose is to 'unclutch' and enlighten. I can say it is a direct means to enlightenment.

Here, Arjuna again asks the questions we all will have in our minds. We are so used to wanting to reach a particular goal that we are always concerned about what will happen if the goal is not reached. What happens if we start with faith but somewhere, we fail in controlling the mind?

Be very clear, this situation will happen. When we start off, we will face failure in our attempts to control the mind. If we don't experience this, we should check ourselves because we may be fooling ourselves with whatever we are doing!

Arjuna wants Krishna to give an assurance that enlightenment is possible for all kinds of people. He wants Krishna to give an assurance that even if a person starts practicing intensely but fails due to the wavering mind, it is still possible to attain the divine consciousness. Actually, at the very root of Arjuna's question is the mind that is generating the fear and making him believe that it is hard to find the no-mind state. The mind does not want to lose its existence. The mind always looks for a reason to convince us that we cannot carry on our lives without it.

In our day-to-day life we face the situation that Arjuna faces here. Even with activities that we have carried out successfully many times in the past, we feel nervous when we start again. Will we succeed? What will happen if we fail? Even before we begin, we start imagining the worst.

Actually, it is okay to imagine the worst. Then we are prepared to face the worst situation. I tell people that to overcome fear and face fear, it is good to imagine the worst-case scenario. Visualize it fully, relive such an experience fully and the fear will disappear. However, if all we can do is to think of the worst things and continue with our fear, we will be in the same situation as Arjuna - totally confused!

The future is not ours to see. The goal as we imagine it does not exist. There is no purpose to life. The meaning of life is to live. That is all. If only Arjuna was comfortable with just practicing the techniques that Krishna has already outlined for him, trusting Krishna and enjoying the path shown to him, he would not be asking such questions. Arjuna still does not believe Krishna. He does not believe what the master has told him so far. He has heard Krishna. He intellectually understood the meaning of what has been said, that is all. He has not internalized the master and he has not imbibed the master's words. Arjuna has yet to learn.

Krishna assures Arjuna by saying that there is no destruction either in this life or the next life for one who is on the right path, the path of yoga. He provides the assurance that Arjuna is looking for, since he knows how frail Arjuna's state of mind is. Krishna is giving a wonderful assurance for all of us that even a small amount of practice of this yoga will save us from the cycle of birth and death. Any yoga practiced will give us tremendous benefit. The very intent to practice yoga itself means that we have gained knowledge about the problem of the mind. The very intent to try yoga means that we know about the nature of the mind.

One important thing we should know is that any movement of the body with a strong intention will cause that intention to get deeply inscribed into our bodies and muscles. If the intention is wanting to become one with our true identity and wanting to drop our false identity, it will get deeply inscribed or recorded in our body and will remain there and automatically the body will start moving towards that one goal. Any emotion with which we move the body becomes strongly ingrained in our system. This is a very important thing to understand. If we move our body with the thought of bliss, the bliss emotion gets ingrained in our system. If it is anger that moves our body, the anger emotion gets ingrained. This is such an important and beautiful truth. Don't miss it!

There is a wonderful movie, 'What the Bleep Do We Know?' Using principles of Quantum Physics they visually explain this truth from *Vedānta* very nicely. They say that whenever we experience an emotion in our system, it is like rain. The emotion pours like rain, it happens inside our system, in our being. There are particular cells that catch those emotions. For example, if we think about anger, there are particular cells that catch the anger emotion. Not only do they just catch the emotion, they start reproducing it as well. This cell will create at least four or five more of the same 'anger' cells.

One important thing that you should know is that the basic quality of life is reproduction and expansion.

These cells that catch the anger emotion start reproducing and each cell creates some five or six more anger cells. The next time, when the shower of anger happens, when the rain of anger happens, all these cells will also catch the same emotion. They become the size of the original cells. Now, these cells also start reproducing. The third time, when the shower happens, all these cells catch the emotion and start growing. That is why, when you are showered with the same emotion repeatedly, it becomes stronger. The first time, if the emotion of anger affects you for ten minutes, the next time, it will surely become twenty minutes. The third time, it will naturally become half an hour. That is how the emotion becomes stronger.

Therefore, it is possible for us to replicate happiness, joy and bliss as well. It is up to us to choose what type of emotion we want to allow in our bodies, what emotion we want to be ingrained in our system. All that we need to do is to intend to be joyful and joyful cells will keep reproducing. This process cannot stop. We will be full of joy.

We can try this when we meet people we do not particularly like. Just smile at them. However embarrassed we may feel, we should just smile. Not the plastic smile that only covers the lips, but a smile from our heart with warmth, so that the smile spreads to our eyes. See what happens. All our negativity will disappear. In addition, any negativity that we create in others also will disappear and they will respond with the same smile.

In our programs on energization of *cakras*, I advise people to respond always from the *anāhata cakra*, the heart center, to every one in all situations. When our *anāhata* is unblocked, we are capable of pouring out unconditional love. Spread that love around and you will find that the negative emotions of people who approach us with anger, fear or jealousy will be consumed by the energy of love that we unleash.

*Q: How does one know the difference between being an intellectual idiot, as against the development of the intellectual ability that you speak about in connection to the śāstras?*

If a person is torturing himself and others with the knowledge that he has, then he is an intellectual idiot. If he is living happily and giving happiness to others with the knowledge he has, he is intelligent. A man who has intelligence will increase

the peace and joy in his being and in others. Intelligence always creates more bliss. Intelligence *is* bliss.

Please understand that all these four are the same: intelligence, compassion, energy and bliss.

When the Self expresses through the head, it is intelligence. When it expresses through the heart, it is compassion. When it expresses through the being, it is energy. When it is there without expressing, it is bliss. If we are intelligent, we will be blissful and we will radiate bliss.

An intellectual idiot is driven by ego. All that he is interested in is in showing off the knowledge that he has got. This is knowledge that has no value. When he realizes that such acquired knowledge that has not become his own experience has no value, he rises to a higher level of intelligence. At least he knows that he does not know and he's not embarrassed anymore to admit that he does not know.

Just reading the scriptures is of no lasting value at all. All scriptures, from whichever religion they may originate, are metaphorical. They do not represent facts. They convey the truth. These truths are experiential. They need to be imbibed by internalization and experiential understanding. When a person has arrived at this level of understanding, he is no longer repeating mere knowledge. He is sharing wisdom, experiential wisdom.



## Rare Birth Of A Yogi

*6.41 The person who has fallen from yoga after many years of living in the world and doing virtuous deeds takes birth in the house of the virtuous and prosperous.*

*6.42 Or the yogi certainly takes birth in a family of wise people. Certainly, such a birth is rare in this world.*

*6.43 O son of Kuru, on taking such a birth, the person gains the intelligence of the previous body and tries again to attain yoga.*

Krishna talks about how we choose everything in our lives, including our birth, when and where we are born and whom we choose as our parents. This truth may seem difficult for most of us to believe. Our birth is not just an accident. It is an incident and we are the ones who choose all the details about this incident. We must understand that it is only we who program and design everything and everybody in our life, including our parents and environment. Our choice of the next body is based on the way we have lived our life in this body.

For example, if we live to eat rather than eat to live, at the time of death, we will still have the desire to continue eating. So, we will design our next body to fulfill this desire. We might choose the body of a pig. Or, if we have lived our life only for sleeping and doing no creative work, we might choose the body of a buffalo. So, based on the attitude we have lived with, we choose the next body. This is the basic idea on which our *janma-marana cakra* (cycle of life and death) revolves.

We go into a birth-death cycle. We go and come back again, taking a new body. This phenomenon happens again and again. Whatever we choose at the moment of death will become reality in the next birth. You will be that. Some

people think that they can manage if they remind themselves to think of the Almighty, at the last second of their lives. But that will never happen unless we make that a habit throughout our life. If we repeat 'Coca-Cola' our whole life, we cannot and will not think of Rama or Krishna during our last moments! How we live our life will decide the quality of our death as well.

Here, Krishna gives the assurance to Arjuna and to the whole of humanity that a person who has performed virtuous activities takes birth in a family of wise people or in a prosperous family. His pious activities will earn him a place among the higher worlds. After dwelling there for a while he will take birth in the family of righteous people to once again enable his spiritual seeking.

We can choose our body and the time that we wish to be born. When we live our life running behind our greed and desires, running after 'what next? what next...?', naturally, at the time of our death also, we will not be ready to leave the body. The body will be tired of running behind desires continuously, but the mind will not be ready to leave. So we will leave the body in the pain and suffering of this push and pull of desires and fear. If we can just relax into the present and take life moment by moment, we will leave the body in a relaxed way, peacefully.

Once we leave the body, in three *kṣaṇa*, three moments, we get into a new body and we are reborn. *Kṣaṇa* in Sanskrit does not mean 'seconds'. It means the gap between two thoughts. If we have been constantly running behind desires, the gap between two thoughts will be really small for us. When we learn to relax into the present, the gap between two thoughts increases and the three *kṣaṇas* can be a long time. In three *kṣaṇas*, we take on the new body to fulfill whatever desires were unfulfilled when we left the previous body. Here, Krishna says that on taking birth, we gain the intelligence of the previous body and continue the journey where we left off.

One thing we should understand here is that when we say death, it is not just the death that happens at the end of our life. It is what happens every day and night. Every night, we go from the physical body to the dream body and causal body. In the morning, we enter the physical body again. We die and take birth again.

People tell me, 'No, no, *Swamiji*. Everyday when we enter into the dream we are not entering into the same dream, but everyday when we wake up to the reality we are entering into the same reality. So with this scale we can say this is reality and that is dream.'

Please be very clear, in one night's dream we live even twenty years of life, am I right? In one night's dream, don't we live even twenty years of life? In that twenty-year span, we are in the same dream. But is that reality? No! So be very clear, this whole life which you think as reality, may very well be part of one dream! This whole span that we are thinking of as real can be part of one dream.

Every day we leave the body. We go to the causal body when we fall asleep. Every day we die. When we wake up, we come back. Every day we come back to life. As of now, every morning, how do we come back to life? How do we take this body again in the morning? Just look deeply. What happens at the time when we get up from bed?

First thing, usually, the moment we gain awareness, either a thought based on greed or fear will hit us. There will be thoughts based on greed such as, 'I need to get this today,' or thoughts based on fear such as, 'I have to finish this work today in office. Will I be able to?' Some thought based on fear or greed will hit us. Immediately, we will jump out of our bed. The moment we assume our body, that moment is a moment of taking birth. Please be very clear, that is the moment we take the body.

Early morning, the thought with which we enter into the body, which makes us assume the body, is going to play a major role in our consciousness. The first thought is going to play a major role in our consciousness throughout the day. Just as the thought with which we leave the body on dying decides the kind of body we will assume in our next birth, in exactly the same way, every day the thought with which we get up in the morning and assume this body decides the quality of that day, that life. If we understand this once and alter our thoughts at the time of waking up, we will alter the whole consciousness. The quality of our consciousness can be changed.

When we get up from bed, let the first thought be related to love and compassion. Get up only to express life in bliss. Get up just out of joy. When we get up from bed, let us assume the body with gratitude to the Divine. With this, the whole quality of our consciousness will change. We will become a divine incarnation!

Krishna is actually giving a technique on how to become Krishna, how to enter into Krishna consciousness, to become an incarnation. The man who assumes the body out of love and compassion is an incarnation. If we assume the body out of greed or fear, we are human. Early morning, let the first thought be gratitude. Let it be out of love. Let it be from compassion. Our whole life will become pure



eternal bliss. Our whole life will be lived with a different, enlightened consciousness.

*Q: Beloved Swamiji, how can one go about getting closer to the present moment? How can we reduce our number of thoughts per second?*

Your question is from an earlier discourse, when I was explaining about TPS (thoughts per second). The moment we ask, 'How can I start living in the present moment?,' we have already started living in the future. The very question means that we have escaped or missed the present moment.

We want an assurance that we must be able to live in the present moment throughout our lives.

We don't need anything to live in the present moment. Just live in this moment, that's all! Nothing else needs to be done. But we don't feel fulfilled by living in this moment. We need an assurance that we will live in the present moment throughout our life.

'Teach me something so that I will not forget to live in the present moment always.'

That's what we are saying when we ask this question. The moment we want an assurance about the future, we have missed the present. No wonder we don't feel fulfilled. Be very clear, the future can never be assured. Whenever you remember, come back to the present, that's all. And if we live in the present, in this moment, then naturally in the next moment also we will be in the present. This is because the next moment takes birth from this moment. This moment is the mother and the next moment is the child. So, if we are in the present moment in this moment, then the next moment also, we will be automatically in the present moment.

If we are postponing and escaping from this moment, then from the next moment also we will escape. So be very clear, a simple technique to be in the present moment is just to be aware of whatever we are doing at this point in time and focus on it completely. If we are reading a sentence, focus so completely on it to the exclusion of everything else, that we immediately rise into the present moment. Drop all thoughts about what happened a few moments or a few hours ago, and stop worrying about what you need to do after a few moments or a few hours. Just focus on these words.

*Q: At zero TPS does the past, present and future exist within that moment?*

Yes, when our TPS is zero, past and future both disappear, and only the present remains.

Thoughts are the movement of the mind from past to future, and back from future to past. This continuous oscillation of the mind is the inner chatter that is the cause of all our suffering. When the mind is stilled, thoughts stop; at least the perceived connection between one thought and another stops. Therefore, past and future disappear. When past and future have disappeared, what *is* is, we can't even call that as the present. Present is present as long as we have past and future. When those too have disappeared, what *is*, is. Buddha says, '*tathāta*,' 'what is'. We can't even call that as the present moment. This is what Shankara calls '*Brahman*'.

The present by itself is eternal. It is eternity. It is the *pūrṇa*, the Whole that Shankara talked about and the *śūnya*, the nothingness that Buddha talked about. It is from the present that the future arises; it is that into which the past disappears. All that matters, therefore, is the present moment. Focus on it and be in bliss.



## Become A Yogi

*6.44 Due to the practice in his previous life, he certainly gets attracted automatically to yoga and he is inquisitive about yoga and transcends the scriptures.*

*6.45 A yogi by trying and practicing, after many births, is cleansed of all sins and achieves the highest state.*

*6.46 A yogi is greater than the ascetic, than the wise and the person who works for the fruit of action. So, become a **yogi**, O Arjuna.*

*6.47 Of all yogis, one who always lives in Me, thinking of Me, who worships Me in full faith, he is considered engaged in Me.*

Krishna is describing the process of the human experience. Why do we assume the body? We think that we can experience bliss through the body and mind; that is why we assume the body. When we realize that bliss cannot be experienced through the body or mind, we know that going beyond the body is the only way to experience it. Then we will not assume the body. Assuming the human body is simply our choice.

People ask me, 'Why do we choose to have the human experience?' That we should find out for ourselves. *Why did we assume this body?* I asked the question and I got the answer. I know why I chose the human experience. Ask the question yourself and pursue it as a quest and you will get the answer. You will be enlightened.

We claim that we want to experience the ultimate and that we want to be enlightened. But I tell you, if we really want to be enlightened, there is nothing that can stop us. There is no hindrance to our being enlightened except our own self. As of now, actually, enlightenment is last on our laundry list of items that we

want to do in life! When the urge becomes urgent, when the question becomes a burning quest, then we get the answer. There is no other way.

In these verses, Krishna promises a few things. He says that whatever we have learned in one life does not get wasted. We do not start from ground zero in the next birth. We start from where we left off. Our *vāsanās*, our mindset in one birth, continues into another. He also promises that if we keep practicing, if we keep trying, we will be cleansed of all sins and reach the highest state. Such a person, Krishna promises, will reach Him.

At the end of the day, what Krishna implies is this: We need to do our bit. We need to practice yoga, the path that leads to self-awareness, the path that leads to Krishna, with dedication, perseverance and conviction. There is no other way. There is no short cut. Once you do your bit, the master promises deliverance. He promises that you will be one with Him.

Now, let us analyze this truth with our questions and answers. After that, we will enter into a technique given by Sri Krishna to go beyond the mind, to awaken our senses, to look in.

***Q: Swamiji, you talked about Nithya Yoga, which is being taught by teachers trained and ordained by you. Can you tell us more about it?***

I had the great blessing to be around a great yoga master called Raghupati Yogi. I tell you honestly, only now I feel happy about it. In those days I used to hate him because in the morning, at around six or seven o'clock, he would start the yoga training. I used to feel that it was torture! Any beginner in yoga would know what I mean!

He would make me bend this way and that. The temple where he used to teach me yoga has a beautiful hall with stone pillars. He would make me climb up all the stone pillars. I had to climb up and down twenty to thirty pillars continuously. I am still not able to find any reference to support why I was made to climb the pillars. In no yoga book does it say one is to climb any pillars! He would make me climb using only one hand. I wasn't allowed to use two hands. I had to use only one hand and climb up and come down. And then he would make me swallow a long cloth to clean the intestines.

Until the age of thirteen he prepared my body and my mind to enter into the experience of enlightenment and to stay in the experience of enlightenment. Entering into the experience of enlightenment is not a big thing. As I have said, to have a glimpse of the 'no-mind' state, to have *satori*, to have one experience of unclutching is not a big thing. But to stay in that - not only to stay in that, but to express that energy through the body, our body and mind need to be prepared. That is the real thing.

Just having one glimpse is not a big thing. Anybody can have it. To stay in that same space, staying in the same consciousness and expressing it needs a little preparation. I think he prepared my body to hold and radiate the energy of enlightenment.

Raghupati Yogi was from the lineage of Patanjali. Patanjali is the founder of the yoga system. Patanjali is the first master who created a clear, scientific, logical system to reproduce the experience of enlightenment. Until Patanjali, enlightenment was an accident; by chance a few people attained it. It was more like gambling. You have to play, but there is no guarantee.

Patanjali was the first master, I can say the spiritual navigator, who really did the mapping and gave the complete directions. He created clear-cut directions, the step-by-step formula to reproduce the experience of enlightenment. Just like how scientists create a formula to reproduce their understanding of the outer world things, Patanjali created a beautiful formula and technology to reproduce the experience of the inner world, enlightenment.

This yogi, Raghupati Yogi, had mastered the whole science and not only the physical aspects of yoga like bending the body, what we call *āsana*, or Hatha Yoga, but also the other aspects of yoga like working with *prāṇa* (life giving energy), working with the mind, working with the visualization power and emotions. He mastered all the other dimensions of yoga, all the other aspects of yoga. He gave me a deep insight into the core truths.

These insights were sometimes revealing, sometimes shocking. Sometimes they even looked very contradictory. I used to ask sometimes, 'I am able to understand what is written in the book by Patanjali, but I am not able to understand your commentary.' Then he would explain, 'In the books or Yoga Sutra, it is only the verbal language of Patanjali that is recorded. It is not the body language. What he wanted to convey was not recorded. Naturally, much was lost. That is what I am explaining to you now.'

For example, now I say, 'Be unclutched.' Somehow, fortunately we have the video recorder and everything else to record whatever I am saying and the purpose of what I am saying, and the ambience in which I am saying all these things. If you just take only the verbal message and convey it to the next generation, after two hundred years, and let us say that only the words 'Be Unclutched' are delivered, what will happen?

If someone asks, 'What is the message of Paramahansa Nithyananda?'

The other person would say, 'He always used to say, Be Unclutched. This means that you should not drive any car that has a clutch. Stop using cars!'

Then another person might say, 'Not only cars but anything with clutches, we should not use. That is the meaning of Nithyananda's teachings.'

The truth behind the words 'Be Unclutched' is very different, is it not? When only the verbal language is recorded, when the body language is not recorded, when the purpose for which the word is uttered is not recorded, we don't know what type of interpretation will be given after 100 or 200 years. Only the person who has experienced the consciousness of Patanjali can bring Patanjali back to life. I had the great fortune to be with a master who had experienced that consciousness. He experienced and lived in the inner space of Patanjali. That's the reason he used to reveal the deeper truths of the yoga science.

I will try to share a few of those things with you all, a few revelations. The foundation of Patanjali's Yoga is called Ashtaanga Yoga. People translate that as the eight steps to Yoga. It is not eight steps; it is eight parts. All eight parts should be practiced at one time, not in sequence.

The first step is *yama*. The next step is *niyama*. If we decide that we will go to the second step only after doing the first step, we will never be able to go to the second step. We will never be able to go to the second step because the first step can happen in us only when we have attained *samādhi*, the eighth stage! The first rule in *yama* is truthfulness. But only after we have experienced *samādhi* can real truthfulness happen in us. Until then, whatever we talk about will be only a fact. It will not be the truth.

Fact is not truth. Fact is truth as understood by our senses. Whatever part of the truth we understand with our senses is what we call fact. We can neither understand the truth, nor speak the truth, nor live the truth until we experience the eighth limb which is *samādhi*. These are the eight paths or limbs of

enlightenment. So they can't be the steps of yoga, they have to be only the parts or paths or limbs of yoga. There are so many other beautiful revelations I had from him.

Once I asked him, 'Why are you making me climb all these pillars? I don't find any books saying, 'climbing pillars is yoga.'

He said a beautiful thing. He said, 'For whatever purpose you bend your body or move your body, that memory, that idea will become completely inserted or recorded into your body and mind.' This is one of the important revelations I had from him.

This is a very startling revelation. He says that with whatever intention we move our body, bend our body, or make our body active, that intention, that purpose will be recorded into our body. That purpose, that idea, that *samskāras* will start expressing in our body. He means that the way in which we bend, the method in which we stand up, or the method in which we do yoga is not what becomes embedded in us. The method in which we do yoga postures or breathe, all these things are not too important. He says if we have an intention to have health, and do whatever we want for that intention, move our body any way with that intention, health will simply happen in us.

There is too much of an association between diseases and postures that remedy those diseases, especially in the West. 'For this disease, we have to do that posture, for that disease we have to do this posture. For this problem we have to do that technique.' This connection is too much in the West. Raghupati Yogi gave me this revelation that any posture practiced, not merely the postures, any movement, any physical movement practiced for some purpose or having some intention, will create that effect in our body. He said that if we strongly believe that ordinary sitting can give us health, that is enough. We can sit just for health. We will see health happening in us. I asked how this could be. He said, 'That is the way it is!'

When I posed that question I expected an intellectual explanation. But he said, 'That is the way it is.' It is because our body itself is made out of our memories. We are an expression of our own self-hypnosis. Any way we move our body with the faith that this or that will happen in us, the same effect will simply start expressing in us. Every memory is recorded in our muscles. So when we change the memories, we can just change our system also. Our system can respond to the memory that we are creating.

He is the master who gave birth to the new system that I am introducing to the world as Nithya Yoga, yoga for eternity. We are trying to bring in all the basic truths of yoga as revealed by Patanjali; not from Patanjali's verbal language that everybody has access to, but from Patanjali's body language, which can be expressed by only the person who has experienced the inner space of Patanjali, the consciousness of Patanjali.

Trying to express yoga according to Patanjali's body language, according to Patanjali's inner space is what we call Nithya Yoga. The purpose is to experience bliss. It is aimed at working towards bliss, experiencing bliss, and expressing bliss. The capacity to experience bliss will just explode in our inner space. The capacity to radiate bliss will start happening in our body. Our system is not prepared to stay in that same space. Our system is not ready to radiate that same experience continuously.

Nithya Yoga prepares our body to experience and stay in and radiate the inner bliss, the eternal bliss. Ordinarily our mind is not capable of staying in bliss or excitement. Our system is not capable of staying in that high excitement. It is neither trained, nor is it capable enough as yet.

Through Nithya Yoga, I am trying to train seekers not only to experience the bliss, but also to stabilize the experience in themselves, and to radiate that experience in their life. The purpose of Nithya Yoga is to help people unclutch and experience the eternal bliss. The physical healing may be a side effect.

Be very clear, yoga cannot be reduced to a physical exercise. Meditation cannot be reduced just to a technique to give us a little peace. These have deeper and more sacred meanings. Yoga is for much more than just physical health. Physical health is just one side effect happening through yoga. In the same way, meditation is not just for mental well-being. Mental well-being is just one side effect of meditation. So yoga and meditation cannot be reduced to techniques for creating physical and mental health. They are meant for a deeper purpose and to experience a totally different inner space. They are the pathways to experience eternal bliss, *nityānanda*.

We are trying to bring this truth to life through Nithya Yoga, through this new system, or I can say the oldest system. I can't say it is a new system since it is the oldest system, as Patanjali wanted. We are trying to bring to life the same experience that Patanjali expressed.



***Q: What is the difference between dharma and purpose?***

Purpose drives us crazy. With purpose we stop enjoying our lives. We start thinking only about the goal. With *dharma*, we live the very life. We start enjoying the path. *Dharma* means enjoying the path and purpose means enjoying the goal. If we are enjoying the path we are in *dharma*. If we are enjoying the goal, we are living towards the purpose.

***Q: Respected Swamiji, what is the difference between Bhagavad Gita and Maha Gita referred to as Ashtavakra Gita?***

Ashtavakra Gita is also a beautiful book! More than fifty-eight Gitas are available, including Rama Gita, Shiva Gita, Anu Gita, Vyaadha Gita, Ashtavakra Gita, etc. There are so many Gitas that are available, but nothing can be compared to the Bhagavad Gita. This is everything put together and something more. Ashtavakra Gita is only for people who want the spiritual experience. Bhagavad Gita is for every being.

If I start speaking from where I am, it will never benefit all of you. I should start speaking from where you all are and not from where I am. Ashtavakra starts speaking from where He is. But Krishna starts speaking from where we are. So Krishna can give us the experience because He starts from where we are standing.

***Q: Dear Swamiji, yesterday you said that I am god; I am not sure about this. I did not find a single quality of god in me. Please explain.***

Whether we believe it or not, accept it or not, realize it or not, want it or not, experience it or not, we are all god!

Some fish go along with the current. Some fish go against the current. There are some people who just float with Existence, who just float with the Divine. There are some people who go against the Divine, who oppose the Divine. But one thing we should understand, whether it flows along with the current or goes against the current, the fish is in the water! In the same way, whether we become enlightened or think we are not enlightened, we *are* enlightened. The question is not whether

we are enlightened or not. The choice is, either we can realize it and live blissfully or suffer without realizing it.

So, whether we realize it or not, we are god! In that there is no choice. We have no choice in being god. We have only one choice. If we want, we can realize it and express it joyfully, or we can suffer. There is no other choice. Whether the fish flows along with the current or goes against the current, it has to be in the water only. If we are not divine, we cannot even inhale and exhale. It is the very energy that is inside our being.

One more thing is that again and again society creates guilt in us that we are not sufficient unto ourselves. Please be very clear, society sets a standard and it never lets us feel the divinity in us. The first thing we need to understand is that we are beyond body and mind. All our guilt is related to body and mind. So, don't use the standard that is given by society to measure whether we are god or not. The social standard is never right and can never be fulfilled either.

The moment we allow guilt to happen in us, we are ready to be exploited. Anybody who wants to exploit us first puts guilt into us. The person who wants to exploit us at the physical level makes us believe we are not strong enough. The person who wants to exploit us at the level of beauty makes us feel we are not beautiful enough. Only then can all the cosmetic products be sold. Why do you think these cosmetic companies conduct beauty contests? Just to make us feel guilty that we are not beautiful, so that we will buy their products and beautify ourselves.

Be very clear, we *are* enough unto ourselves. Never run after anybody else's measurements. Why should we bother about somebody else's measurements and standards? Each one of us is a unique flower. If god were an engineer, He would generate ten billion Miss Universes and ten billion Mr. Universes. But He is not an engineer. God is a painter. That is why every one of our dimensions is different. Every one of us is unique! The moment we start thinking, 'I am not beautiful,' we start buying all the cosmetic products and try painting our face. We try all possible makeup methods.

In the same way, in the spiritual field also, the so-called religious people put guilt into us. They say, 'We are not that, we are not this.' First, they start giving us ideas that are impractical. Vivekananda says beautifully, 'Never teach men to be truthful. Teach them how to be.' Never give dead teachings. Give people the technology. Give them the science that will empower them. The so-called religious people who don't know the technology, who don't know how to transform the

energy by themselves, who have not transformed their own energy, are like parrots. They repeat morality and impossible goals from scriptures and create guilt in us.

That is why again and again I tell people, 'Never listen to a person who is not enlightened. Never listen to a person who has not experienced the truth himself. He will give us all impractical ideas.' As I was saying the other day, people write big books about how to really start living joyfully, and they themselves live unhappy lives! Their teachings are impractical because they have not experienced what they are preaching. So be very clear, when a person is not enlightened, he creates only complications.

Even your so-called moral ideas are just problems. A person should never be told or advised to be good, never. He should be taught *how* to be good. The technology should be taught. The science should be given. When we don't give the technology and only give them the advice, we only create more trouble for others. The person who receives the advice and not the technology starts creating deep guilt within and becomes schizophrenic.

Please be very clear, guilt is created in us at three levels. The people who are cunning enough to hide their personal lives are the ones who create guilt in us. First, at the physical level, the guilt given to us is, 'We are not strong enough.' Only if we believe we are not strong enough, we will become slaves and others can control us. Second, at the level of beauty, 'We are not beautiful enough.' We are gullible and go for all the fashion shows and the cosmetic products. Now, they can sell all cosmetic products and dump them on our heads. And the third is at the spiritual level, 'We are not spiritual enough, we are not pure enough, and we are not spiritual beings.' The people who are doing these three businesses create these three kinds of guilt in us. Enlightened masters will always liberate us from all the guilt. They always work towards dissolving our guilt.

A small story:

Three women died and reached Yama's abode. Yama Dharma (Lord of death who gives judgment at the time of death) was sitting there for judgment. He called the first lady and she came. He asked, 'Did you live a pure life?' She said, 'Yes, Lord! I lived a pure life. I was one hundred percent faithful to my husband.' Then Yama verified with the records and said, 'Alright, you lived a beautiful life. Have the golden key.' He gave her a golden key and a first class, air-conditioned suite in heaven. She left and the next lady came for judgment.

Now, Yama asked, 'Did you live a pure life?' She said, 'Almost. Physically I never did anything wrong, but mentally once or twice, when I saw one or two movies, mentally I made one or two mistakes.' Yama verified with the report. He said 'Alright, at least you are honest, you confessed! Have the silver key. You have a second class suite, go and enjoy.' He sent her to heaven.

The third lady came for judgment. Yama asked, 'Did you live a pure life?' She put her head down and said, 'Lord, forgive me. I have done everything that you can imagine and that which you can't imagine.' Then Yama Dharma just looked this way and that way. He said, 'Here, this is my room key, I will join you there shortly!'

Understand that all our morality is taught to us by people who have hidden their lives, who have given their room keys! Look into life clearly. We should not create guilt in ourselves and suffer. We should not feel that we are not God. The guilt created in us by these so-called religious people only makes us feel that we are not God. Whether we believe it or not, accept it or not, realize it or not, want it or not, experience it or not, we are gods! We have only one choice, we can realize it and enjoy ourselves or we can go on suffering.

## MEDITATION

Now it is time to look in. Now it is time to tune ourselves to that highest teaching given by Sri Krishna in this Dhyāna Yoga. Now we will enter into the meditation. If we are ready to sit for the next ten minutes, we will start the meditation.

Please sit straight and close your eyes. Keep your head, neck and spine, all three in a straight line. Inhale and exhale as slowly as possible and as deeply as possible.

Slowly, in a relaxed way, bring your awareness to your *ājñā cakra*. Concentrate between the two eyebrows. Bring your awareness between the two eyebrows. Remember and pray to that energy that came as Krishna, that is guiding us and helping us in our life. Pray to that energy that gave us the Bhagavad Gita.

Meditate on the pure light energy. If your mind wanders here and there, don't worry. When you remember, bring it back again and relax in your *ājñā cakra*, between your eyebrows. Don't concentrate. In a very relaxed way, be aware of the *ājñā cakra*, the space in between the two eyebrows.

*(a few minutes pass)*

Slowly, very slowly bring your mind to your heart and meditate on your heart center. If you want, you can touch your heart center with the hand and feel it. Try to bring your awareness to the heart center. Try to remember the heart center. Forget all other parts of your body; forget your mind. Just become the heart center. Just be in the heart center. Inhale and exhale as slowly as possible.

May you experience your pure inner space. May you experience the eternal bliss, *nithyananda*.

*(a few minutes pass)*

*Om Śānti, Śānti, Śānti*

Relax. Slowly, very slowly, open your eyes.

We may wonder how a simple technique like this one can lead us into our Self. Please understand that we always live in the head. Start living from the heart. We will then start acting from intelligence. We will start acting, not from our head but from our heart. When we start acting from the heart, we don't calculate. The very calculation disappears, the 'I, I, I' disappears. And naturally our senses become sensitive. We don't abuse our senses. We don't destroy our senses. Too much of the energy that is supplied to the heart is taken away by the mind. The fuel supply to the mind will be reduced and the fuel supply to the heart will be increased.

So try to continuously remember this heart region, the *anāhata cakra*. Naturally, we will have awareness in the *ājñā* also. In the last session, Krishna gave the technique to be in the *ājñā*. Today, He says start with the *ājñā* and come down to *anāhata*. This is because in the heart, there is a possibility of much more happening. The possibility of reaching is easier in the heart. The possibility is much greater in the heart. Krishna says, 'Let you be in the heart.'

Look in! You will realize 'You are That.' Just look in, you will experience the eternal bliss, *nitya ānanda*. Let us pray to that ultimate energy, *Parabrahma* Krishna to give us all the eternal bliss, *nityānanda*.

*Thus ends the sixth chapter named Abhyāsa Yoga of the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of Yoga dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.*

Bhagavad**Gita**

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Verses



# Invocation Verses

> nñVñ® à{V~ñ(YVñ\$^JdVmZnam` Uā ñd` \$  
i`mgā J{WVñ\$ñamU\_ñZZm\_Ü` o\_hm^naV\$  
AÜVm\_Vd{fÜt ^JdVt AîQñKenÜ` m` Zt  
Aâ~ Êd\_ZñYXm\_ ^JdXJrVo^dÜfUt

*Om pārthāya pratibodhitām bhagavatā nārāyaṇena svayam  
vyāseṇa grahitām purāṇa muninā madhye mahābhārataṁ |  
advaitāmṛtavarṣiṇīm bhagavatīm aṣṭādaśadyāyinīm  
amba tvām anusandadhāmi bhagavadgīte bhavadveṣiṇīm ||*

*Om, I meditate upon you, Bhagavad Gita the affectionate Mother, the Divine Mother showering the nectar of non duality and destroying rebirth, (who was) incorporated into the Mahabharata of eighteen chapters by sage Vyasa, the author of the **purāṇas** and imparted to Arjuna by Lord Narayana, Himself.*

dnqKdGw\$Xo\$H\$gMmUa\_X2\_2&  
XoH\$na\_mZYX\$H\$U\$dYXoOJÜp\_2&&

*vasudeva sutam devam kamsa canura mardanam |  
devaki paramanandam krishnam vande jagad gurum ||*

*I salute you Lord Krishna, Teacher to the world, son of Vasudeva, supreme bliss of Devaki, destoryer of Kamsa and Chaanura*

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# Verses of Gita Chapter - 1

AW àW\_mj`m :

A0E{dfmX`mJ:

Arjunaviśāda Yogaḥ

YVani>CdnM

Y\_pjdoHtej dog\_dVm`w tgd: &  
\_m\_H\$m nE\$elmüp {H\$\_Htd gÄO` && 1.1

*dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca*

*dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ |  
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś ca 'va kim akurvata sañjaya || 1.1*

*dhṛtarāṣṭra*: Dhritarashtra; *uvāca*: said; *dharmakṣetre*: in the place of righteousness; *kurukṣetre*: in this location of kurukshetra; *samavetāḥ*: gathered; *yuyutsavaḥ*: desiring to fight; *māmakāḥ*: my people; *pāṇḍavāḥ*: the sons of Pandu; *ca*: and; *eva*: also; *kim*: what; *akurvata*: did they do; *sañjaya*: O Sanjaya

**1.1 king Dhritarashtra asked: O Sanjaya, on this righteous location of Kurukshetra, what did my sons and those of Pandu ready to fight, do?**

gÄO` CdnM

X7Q%a/wmE\$elnZrH\$ i`j\$Xii nY/ZnVXm &  
AnMm @mg`â` anOm dMZ\_~drV^ && 1.2

*sañjaya uvāca*

*dr̥ṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkaṁ vyūḍhaṁ duryodhanas tadā |  
ācāryam upasaṅgamyā rājā vacanam abravīt || 1.2*

*sañjaya*: Sanjaya; *uvāca*: said; *dr̥ṣṭvā*: having seen; *tu*: indeed; *pāṇḍavānīkaṁ*: the Pandava army; *vyūḍhaṁ*: arranged in formation; *duryodhanaḥ*: Duryodhana; *tadā*: then; *ācāryam*: the teacher; *upasaṅgamyā*: approaching; *rājā*: the king; *vacanam*: words; *abravīt*: said

**1.2 Sanjaya said: O king, looking at the Pandava army in full formation, Duryodhana went to his teacher and spoke.**



ní`VnfmESmānUm\_nMm`©\_hVt M\_y`2`  
i`TnDmXnāU Vd {eī`U Yr\_Vm`1.3

*pasyai 'tām pāṇḍuputrānām ācārya mahatīm camūm |*  
*vyūḍhām drupada putreṇa tava śiṣyeṇa dhimatā || 1.3*

*pasya*: behold; *etām*: this; *pāṇḍuputrānām*: of the sons of Pandu; *ācārya*: O teacher; *mahatīm*: great; *camūm*: army; *vyūḍhām*: formed; *drupada-putreṇa*: by the son of Drupada; *tava śiṣyeṇa*: by disciple; *dhimatā*: intelligent

**1.3 O my teacher, behold the great army of the sons of Pandu, arrayed for battle by your intelligent disciple, the son of Drupada.**

Aī eam\_hōdmgm^r\_nOg\_m`qY`  
`w`mZm{danOü ĐpXü\_hmāW: 1.4

*atra śūrā maheśvāsā bhīmārjunasamā yudhi |*  
*yuyudhāno virāṭas ca drupadaś ca mahā rathaḥ || 1.4*

*atra*: here; *śūrāḥ*: heroes; *maheśvāsāḥ*: mighty archers; *bhīmārjuna*: Bhima and Arjuna; *samāḥ*: equal; *yudhi*: in battle; *yuyudhānaḥ*: Yuyudhana; *virāṭaḥ*: Virata; *ca*: and; *drupadaḥ*: Drupada; *ca*: and; *mahārathaḥ*: great charioteers

**1.4 Here in this army there are many heroes wielding mighty bows, and equal in military prowess to Bhima and Arjuna - Yuyudhana, Virata, and the great chariot warrior Drupada.**

Yā`HōVüüqH\$VnZ: H\$teanOü dr`QmZ`2`  
ne{OV^HqV^nOü eā`ü ZanW`d: 1.5

*dhṛṣṭaketuś cekitānaḥ kāsīrājaś ca vīryavān |*  
*purujit kuntibhojaś ca śaibyaś ca narapuṅgavaḥ || 1.5*

*dhṛṣṭaketuḥ*: Dhrshtaketu; *cekitānaḥ*: Chekitaana; *kāsīrājaḥ*: Kaasiraaja; *ca*: and; *vīryavān*: courageous; *purujit*: Purujit; *kuntibhojaḥ*: Kuntibhoja; *ca*: and; *śaibyaḥ*: Saibya; *ca*: and; *narapuṅgavaḥ*: best of men

**1.5 There are courageous warriors like Dhrshtaketu, Chekitana, Kasiraja, Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Saibya, the best of men.**

Ym\_Yü {dHñV Cîm\_pOmM dr` @mZ²  
gm^DmDpnXô mü gd^Ed \_hmaVm && 1.6

yudhāmanyus ca vikrānta uttamaujās ca vīryavān |  
saubhadro draupadeyās ca sarva eva mahārathāḥ || 1.6

yudhāmanyuh: Yudhamanyu; ca: and; vikrāntaḥ: mighty; uttamaujāḥ: Uttamauja; ca: and; vīryavān: brave; saubhadraḥ: the son of Subhadra; draupadeyāḥ: the sons of Draupadi; ca: and; sarva: all; eva: certainly; mahārathāḥ: great chariot fighters.

1.6 There are the mighty Yudhamanyu, the brave Uttamauja, Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra and the sons of Draupadi, all of them great chariot warriors.

Añ\_nH\$ Vm{d{eiñ`oVm{p~mV {ÜOnm\_ &  
Zm^H\$m\_\_gŸ`ñ` g&nW^VmZ²~dr[\_ Vo&& 1.7

asmākaṁ tu viśiṣṭā ye tān nibodha dvijottama |  
nāyakā mama sainyasya saṁjñārthaṁ tān bravīmi te || 1.7

asmākaṁ: our; tu: also; viśiṣṭāḥ: important; ye: who; tān: those; nibodha: know; dvijottama: the best of the brāhmaṇas; nāyakāḥ: leaders; mama: my; sainyasya: of the army; saṁjñārthaṁ: for information; tān: them; bravīmi: I speak; te: to you.

1.7 O best of the brāhmaṇas, know them also, who are the principal warriors on our side the generals of my army; for your information I mention them.

^dmZ²^rî\_ü H\$UE Hñü g{VÄO` : &  
AoeEWm\_m{dH\$UE gm\_X{îmVWd M && 1.8

bhavān bhīṣmaś ca karnaś ca kṛpaś ca samitimjayah |  
aśvatthāmā vikarnaś ca saumadattis tathai 'va ca || 1.8

bhavān: your self; bhīṣmaḥ: grandfather Bhishma; ca: and; karnaḥ: Karna; ca: and; kṛpaḥ: Krpa; ca: and; samitimjayah: victorious in war; aśvatthāmā: Asvatthaama; vikarnaḥ: Vikarna; ca: and; saumadattiḥ: the son of Somadatta; tathā: thus as; eva: only; ca: and

1.8 They are yourself, Bhishma, Karna, Krupa who is ever victorious in battle and even so Asvatthama, Vikarna and the son of Somadatta.

AÝ`oM ~hd: eam\_XW6E`°\$Or{dVm &  
 ZmZmeóàhaUm gdj`Ñ{demaXm && 1.9

anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā mad arthe tyakta jīvitāḥ |  
 nānā śāstra praharaṇāḥ sarve yuddha viśāradaḥ || 1.9

anye: many others; ca: also; bahavaḥ: in great numbers; śūrāḥ: heroes; mad arthe: for my sake; tyakta jīvitāḥ: prepared to risk life; nānā: many; śāstra: weapons; praharaṇāḥ: equipped with; sarve: all of them; yuddha: battle; viśāradaḥ: experienced in military science.

**1.9 There are many other heroes who are prepared to lay down their lives for my sake. All of them are well equipped with different kinds of weapons, and all are experienced in military science.**

An`nā\$VXñ\_nH\$~b\$^rî\_m^aJ V\_2&  
 n`nā\$PēdX\_Vfñ~b\$^r\_m^aJ V\_2&& 1.10

aparyāptam tad asmākaṁ balaṁ bhīṣmābhi rakṣitam |  
 paryāptam tvidam eteṣāṁ balaṁ bhīmābhi rakṣitam || 1.10

aparyāptam: unlimited; tat: that; asmākaṁ: of ours; balaṁ: strength; bhīṣmābhi rakṣitam: protected by Bhishma; paryāptam: limited; tu: but; idaṁ: all this; eteṣāṁ: their; balaṁ: strength; bhīmābhi rakṣitam: protected by Bhima

**1.10 This army of ours protected by Bhishma is invincible whereas their army protected by Bhima is conquerable.**

A`ZfWM gdJfW`Wm^mJ\_dpñWVm &  
 ^rî\_\_dm^aj YVw^dYV: gdEd {h && 1.11

ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathā bhāgam avasthitāḥ |  
 bhīṣmam evā bhirakṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi || 1.11

ayaneṣu: in the divisions; ca: and; sarveṣu: everywhere; yathā bhāgam: as per the divisions; avasthitāḥ: situated; bhīṣmam: to Bhishma; eva: alone; abhi rakṣantu: protect; bhavantaḥ: you; sarva: all; eva: only; hi: indeed

**1.11 Stationed in your respective divisions on all fronts, all of you must give full protection to Bhishma.**

Vñ` gÄÖZ` Z²hf³HñédÖ: {nVm\_h: &  
qghZñK\$(dZÜm\_f; e' \$XÜ\_m àVmndmZ²&& 1.12

*tasya sañjanayan harṣaṁ kuru vṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ |*  
*simha nādaṁ vinadyo 'ccaiḥ śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau pratāpavān || 1.12*

*tasya*: his; *sañjanayan*: causing; *harṣaṁ*: joy; *kuru vṛddhaḥ*: old man of the Kuru dynasty; *pitāmahaḥ*: the grandfather; *simha nādaṁ*: lion's roar; *vinadya*: causing to sound; *uccaiḥ*: loudly; *śaṅkhaṁ*: conch; *dadhmau*: blew; *pratāpavān*: mighty

**1.12 Then Bhishma, the grand old man of the Kuru dynasty, their glorious grandfather, roared like a lion and blew his conch, giving Duryodhana joy.**

VV: e' nū ^ò @ nUdmZH\$Jm\_vl m &  
ghgdnä` hŷ`ŶV g eāXñVw\_lbm^dV²&& 1.13

*tataḥśaṅkhāś ca bheryaś ca paṇavānaka gomukhāḥ |*  
*sahasai 'vā 'bhyahanyanta sa śabdāḥ tumulo 'bhavat || 1.13*

*tataḥ*: then; *śaṅkhāḥ*: conches; *ca*: and; *bheryaś ca paṇavānaka*: drums, bugles, horns and trumpets; *gomukhāḥ*: cow horns; *sahasā eva*: quite suddenly *abhyahanyanta*: blared; *saḥ*: that; *śabdāḥ*: sound; *tumulaḥ*: tumultuous; *abhavat*: became

**1.13 Then, conches, bugles, trumpets, drums and horns were all suddenly sounded, and the combined sound was tumultuous.**

VV:ceVh©\_P\$ \_h{V ñ`ŶXZopñVVm\_p &  
\_mŷd: nmESelüpd {Xi`m\_e' m àXÜ\_Vw && 1.14

*tataḥ śvetair hayair yukte mahati syandane sthitau |*  
*mādhavaḥ pāṇdavaś cai 'va divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmauḥ || 1.14*

*tataḥ*: then; *śvetaiḥ*: by white; *hayaiḥ*: horses; *yukte*: being yoked; *mahati*: magnificent; *syandane*: chariot; *sthitau*: seated; *mādhavaḥ*: Madhava, Shree Krishna; *pāṇdavaḥ*: son of Pandu; *ca*: and; *eva*: only; *divyau*: divine; *śaṅkhau*: conches; *pradadhmauḥ*: blew

**1.14 Then, seated on a magnificent chariot drawn by white horses, both Krishna and Arjuna sounded their divine conches.**

nm#nOY` \$öfrH\$emoXdxIn\$YZÄO` : &  
nmÊ\$XÜ\_m\_hme' \$^r\_H\$\_mF\$HnKa: && 1.15

*pāñcajanyaṁ hr̥ṣīkeśo devadattam dhananjayaḥ |  
pauṇḍram dadhmau mahā śaṅkham bhīma karmā vṛkodaraḥ || 1.15*

*pāñcajanyaṁ*: the conch named Panchajanya; *hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ*: Hrsheekesha, one who directs the senses; *devadattam*: the conch named Devadatta; *dhananjayaḥ*: Dhananjaya, the winner of wealth; *pauṇḍram*: the conch named Paundra; *dadhmau*: blew; *mahā-śaṅkham*: the great conch; *bhīma karmā*: one who performs terrible tasks; *vṛkodaraḥ*: one with the belly of a wolf

**1.15 Then, Krishna blew His conch, called Pancajanya; Arjuna blew his, called Devadatta; and Bhima blew his mighty conch called Paundra.**

AZV{dO` \$anOmH\$Vrnñm` @Y{öa: &  
ZHöb: ghXdü gKmf\_{UnñH\$ñ && 1.16

*anantavijayaṁ rājā kuntī putro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ |  
nakulaḥ sahadewaś ca sughoṣa maṇipuṣpakau || 1.16*

H\$ñ` ü na\_ödnq: {eI Ê\$ M\_hmW: &  
Yñ{ÜZm{danQ\$M gnE` {H\$ünnan{OV: && 1.17

*kāśyaś ca parameṣvāsaḥ śikhaṇḍī ca mahā rathaḥ |  
dhṛṣṭadyumno virāṭaś ca sātyakiś cā 'parājitaḥ || 1.17*

ĐpnXmĐpnXö mü gd@: n\$WdrnVo&  
gn^Đü \_hm-nhp e' nZ²XÜ\_w nWH\$ nWH\$ && 1.18

*drupado draupadeyāś ca sarvaśaḥ pṛthivī pate |  
saubhadraś ca mahābāhuh śaṅkhān dadhmauḥ pṛthak-pṛthak || 1.18*

*anantavijayaṁ*: the conch named Ananta-vijaya; *rājā*: the king; *kuntī putraḥ*: the son of Kunti; *yudhiṣṭhiraḥ*: Yudhishtira; *nakulaḥ*: Nakula; *sahadevaḥ*: Sahadeva; *ca*: and; *sughoṣa maṇipuṣpakau*: the conches named Sughosha and Manipushpaka; *kāśyaḥ*: the king of Kasi



śastrasaṁpāte: the arrows released; dhanuḥ: bow; udyamya: after taking up; pāṇḍavaḥ: the son of Pandu; hr̥ṣīkeśaṁ: to Hrishikesa; tadā: then; vākyaṁ: words; idaṁ: this; āha: said; mahī pate: O Lord of the earth

**1.20 Seeing the sons of Dhritarashtra arrayed in the battle field, Arjuna, the son of Pandu, who was seated in his chariot, bearing the flag marked with Hanuman, took up his bow.**

AOL CdnM  
gZ`né`no\_Θ oaW\$ñWmn`\_@À`W && 1.21  
`ndXVn(parj\_Θh\$`nŌp.\$n\_mZdpñWVnZ²&  
H\$\_©mgh`nŌi`\_pñ\_Z²aUg\_Ū\_o&& 1.22

arjuna uvāca  
senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthāpaya me 'cyuta || 1.21  
yāvad etān nirīkṣe 'haṁ yoddhu kāmān avasthitān |  
kair mayā saha yoddhavyam asmin raṇasamudyame || 1.22

arjuna: Arjuna; uvāca: said; senayoḥ: of the armies; ubhayoḥ: of both; madhye: in between; ratham: the chariot; sthāpaya: position; me: my; acyuta: O infallible one; yāvat: while; etān: all these; nirīkṣe: behold; ahaṁ: I; yoddhu kāmān: desiring to fight; avasthitān: standing; kaiḥ: with whom; mayā: by me; saha: with; yoddhavyam: to be fought; asmin: in this; raṇasamudyame: situation of war;

**1.21, 22 Arjuna said: O Infallible One, please place my chariot between the two armies while I may observe these warriors arrayed for battle and with whom I have to engage in fight.**

`nñ`\_mZnZdj\_Θh\$`EVøI\_g\_mVn &  
Yn/āi`ñ`Xw-Ōō\_Ōō{ā`{MH\$fd: && 1.23

yotsyamānān avekṣe 'haṁ ya ete 'tra samāgatāḥ |  
dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher yuddhe priyacikīrṣavaḥ || 1.23

yotsyamānān: those who wish to fight; avekṣe: see; ahaṁ: I; yaḥ: who; ete: these; atra: here; samāgatāḥ: assembled; dhārtarāṣṭrasya: the son of Dhritarashtra; durbuddheḥ: evil-minded; yuddhe: in the fight; priyacikīrṣavaḥ: to please wishing;

**1.23 Let me see these well wishers in this war of the evil-minded Duryodhana, who have come together here to fight.**

gÄO` Cdm  
Ed\_#öfrHemJG#Höz ^naV &  
gZ` né^` no\_Ö onWm{ EdmaWm\_2 & 1.24

^rî\_DnJà\_# V: gdJfSM\_hrj Vm\_2 &  
Cdm nmW@rî` VnYg\_dVnHöszZ{V & 1.25

sañjaya uvāca

evam ukto hr̥ṣīkeśo guḍākeśena bhārata |  
senayor ubhayor madhye sthāpayitvā rathottamam || 1.24

bhīṣma droṇa pramukhataḥ sarveṣāṁ ca mahīkṣitām |  
uvāca pārtha paśyai 'tān samavetān kurūn iti || 1.25

sañjaya: Sanjaya; uvāca: said; evaṁ: thus; uktaḥ: addressed; hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ: Hrshikesha; guḍākeśena: by Arjun; bhārata: O Bhaarata; senayoḥ: of armies; ubhayoḥ: of both; madhye: in the middle of; sthāpayitvā: by placing; rathottamam: the finest chariot

bhīṣma: grandfather Bhisma; droṇa: the teacher Drona; pramukhataḥ: in front of; sarveṣāṁ: of all; ca: and; mahīkṣitām: of rulers of the world; uvāca: said; pārtha: O Partha; paśyai: see; etān: those; samavetān: assembled; kurūn: the Kurus; iti: thus

**1.24, 25 Sanjaya said: O descendant of Bharata, being thus addressed by Arjuna, Krishna then drew up the fine chariot to the middle of both the armies in front of Bhishma, Drona and all the kings and said, 'Arjuna behold the Kauravas assembled here.'**

VImrî` V²{nWVnz²nnW©{nVZW {nVm\_hnz² &  
AnMm nP\_nVbnî^#VZ²nîrînmî nYgI tnVWm & 1.26  
æemYgüXüpd gZ` né^` no(n &



*tatrā paśyat sthitān pārthaḥ pitṛn atha pitāmahān |*  
*ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn putrān pautrān sakhīms tathā || 1.26*  
*śvaśurān suhrdaś ca 'va senayor ubhayor api |*

*tatra*: there; *apaśyat*: saw; *sthitān*: positioned; *pārthaḥ*: Arjuna; *pitṛn*: fathers; *atha*: also; *pitāmahān*: grandfathers; *ācāryān*: teachers; *mātulān*: maternal uncles; *bhrātṛn*: brothers; *putrān*: sons; *pautrān*: grandsons; *sakhīn*: friends; *tathā*: too; *śvaśurān*: fathers-in-law; *suhṛdaḥ*: well-wishers; *ca*: and; *eva*: only; *senayoḥ*: of the armies; *ubhayoḥ*: of both ; *api*: also

**1.26** *There Arjuna saw, stationed there in both the armies his uncles, grand uncles, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and friends, as well as his fathers-in-law and well-wishers.*

VmZ<sup>2</sup>g\_rú` g H\$Vô : gdmP-YYZdpnVWmZ<sup>2</sup>V& 1.27  
 H\$`mna`m@{di{n{dfx{pX\_~drV<sup>2</sup>&

*tān samīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ sarvān bandhūn avasthitān || 1.27*  
*kṛpayā parayā 'viṣṭo viṣīdann idam abravīt |*

*tān*: those; *samīkṣya*: after seeing; *sa*: he; *kaunteyaḥ*: kaunteya; *sarvān*: all; *bandhūn*: relatives; *avasthitān*: standing; *kṛpayā*: by pity; *parayā*: deep; *āviṣṭaḥ*: filled; *viṣīdan*: lamenting; *idam*: thus; *abravīt*: spoke

**1.27** *Seeing all those relatives present there, Arjuna was overwhelmed with deep pity and spoke in sadness.*

AOQ CdmM  
 NriQ\$ndOZ\$H\$U `w iigig\_mprVW\_<sup>2</sup>V& 1.28  
 grXpV \_\_ Jm nU \_i \$M n[aeu`{V &

*arjuna uvāca*

*drṣṭve 'maṁ svajānaṁ kṛṣṇa yuyutsum samupasthitam || 1.28*  
*sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukhaṁ ca pariśuṣyati |*

*arjuna*: Arjuna; *uvāca*: said; *dr̥ṣṭvā*: after seeing; *imar̥*: all these; *svajanar̥*: kinsmen; *kṛṣṇa*: Krishna; *yuyutsum̐*: all eager to do battle; *samupasthitam*: arranged in form; *sīdanti*: fail; *mama*: my; *gātrāṇi*: limbs; *mukham̐*: mouth; *ca*: and; *pariśuṣyati*: is parching

dmWü earao\_oam\_hf@ Om`Vo 1.29  
JnESd\$ö@VohnVmfH\$ Mpd n[aXøVo

*vepathuś ca śarīre me romaharṣaś ca jāyate || 1.29*  
*gāṇḍivam sraṁsate hastāt tvak cai 'va paridahyate |*

*vepathuḥ*: trembling; *ca*: and; *śarīre*: in body; *me*: my; *romaharṣaḥ*: hair standing on end; *ca*: and; *jāyate*: happens; *gāṇḍivam*: Gaandiva; *sraṁsate*: slips; *hastāt*: from the hands; *tvak*: skin; *ca*: and; *eva*: only; *paridahyate*: is burning

**1.28, 29 Arjuna said: Krishna, seeing my friends and relatives present before me, eager to wage war, my limbs are giving way, my mouth is parching and a shiver is running through my body, my hair is standing on end.**

Z M eH\$`dnWmV^«Vrd M\_o\_Z: 1.30  
{Z\_Îm(Z M nî`m\_ {dnarVm(Z Høed

*na ca śaknomy avasthātuṁ bhramatī 'va ca me manaḥ || 1.30*  
*nimittāni ca paśyāmi viparī tāni keśava |*

*na*: not; *ca*: and; *śaknomy*: am able; *avasthātuṁ*: to stand; *bhramatī'va*: whirling; *ca*: and; *me*: my; *manaḥ*: mind; *nimittāni*: portents; *ca*: also; *paśyāmi*: I see; *viparī tāni*: just the opposite; *keśava*: O Kesava, killer of demon Kesin

**1.30 My bow *gāṇḍiva* is slipping from my hands and my skin is burning all over. My mind is whirling as it were, and I am now unable to stand here any longer.**

na ca śreyo 'nupaśyāmi hatvā svajanam āhave || 1.31  
 na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca |

na ca śreyo 'nupaśyāmi hatvā svajanam āhave || 1.31  
 na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca |

na: not; ca: and; śreyah: good; anupaśyāmi: I see; hatvā: after killing; svajanam: own kinsmen; āhave: in battle; na: not; kāṅkṣe: I desire; vijayaṁ: victory; kṛṣṇa: O Krishna; na: not; ca: and; rājyaṁ: kingdom; sukhāni: pleasures; ca: and

**1.31 I foresee only evil omens, O Krishna; I do not see any good coming out of killing one's own kinsmen in this battle. I do not covet my dear Krishna, victory or kingdom or pleasures.**

kiṁ no rājyena govinda kiṁ bhogair jīvitena vā || 1.32

kiṁ no rājyena govinda kiṁ bhogair jīvitena vā || 1.32

kiṁ: what; naḥ: to us; rājyena: by kingdom; govinda: Govinda; kiṁ: what; bhogaiḥ: by pleasures; jīvitena: life; vā: or

**1.32 Of what use will kingdom or happiness or even life be to us?**

yeṣāṁ arthe kāṅkṣitaṁ no rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca |  
 ta ime 'vasthitā yuddhe prāṇāṁs tyaktvā dhanāni ca || 1.33

yeṣāṁ arthe kāṅkṣitaṁ no rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca |  
 ta ime 'vasthitā yuddhe prāṇāṁs tyaktvā dhanāni ca || 1.33

yeṣāṁ: for whose; arthe: sake; kāṅkṣitaṁ: desired; no: by us; rājyaṁ: kingdom; bhogāḥ: enjoyment; sukhāni: happiness; ca: and; te: they; ime: these; avasthitāḥ: stand; yuddhe: in battle; prāṇāṁs: lives; tyaktvā: giving up; dhanāni: wealth; ca: and

**1.33 For whose sake we desire this kingdom, enjoyment and happiness, they stand in battle staking their lives and property.**

$\text{AnMm} \cdot \text{m}^{\text{P}} \{ \text{nVa: n}^{\text{m}} \text{m VWd M} \{ \text{nVm\_hm} \} \&$   
 $\_ \text{nVbm} \text{ ceem} \text{ n}^{\text{m}} \text{m} \text{ i}^{\text{m}} \text{bm} \text{ g\$p}^{\text{f}} \text{YZnVWm} \& 1.34$

*ācāryāḥ pitarāḥ putrāḥ tathai 'va ca pitāmahāḥ |*  
*mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pauṭrāḥ śyālāḥ sambandhinas tathā || 1.34*

*ācāryāḥ*: teachers; *pitarāḥ*: fathers; *putrāḥ*: sons; *tathā* eva: like that; *ca*: and; *pitāmahāḥ*: grandfathers; *mātulāḥ*: maternal uncles; *śvaśurāḥ*: fathers-in-law; *pautrāḥ*: grandsons; *śyālāḥ*: brothers-in-law; *saṁbandhinaḥ*: relatives; *tathā*: as well as

1.34 Teachers, fathers, sons as well as grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives.

EVmP hYVw\_ÀNn\_ K'Vn{n\_YngKZ &  
A{n l'pns`anÁ`ñ` hVno qH\$ Zw\_hrH\$Vo&& 1.35

*etān na hantum icchāmi ghnato 'pi madhusūdana |*  
*api trailokyārājyasya hetoh kiṁ nu mahīkrte || 1.35*

*etān*: these; *na*: not; *hantum*: for killing; *icchāmi*: I wish; *ghnataḥ*: killed; *api*: even; *madhusūdana*: O killer of the demon Madhu; *api*: even; *trailokya*: of the three worlds; *rājyasya*: of the kingdoms; *hetoḥ*: in exchange; *kim*: what; *nu*: then; *mahikṛte*: for the sake of the earth

*1.35 Madhusudhana (Krishna), even if I am killed (by them) I do not want to kill these ones even to gain control of all three worlds, much less for the earthly lordship.*

{ZhE` YmVamip: H\$màr{V: ñ` m, mZmXZ &  
nmn\_olml` Xñ\_nYhEdVmZmVmVmf Z: && 1.36

*nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrān naḥ kā prītiḥ syāj janārdana ।*  
*pāpam eva 'śrayed asmān hatvai 'tān ātatāyinaḥ ॥ 1.36*

*nihatya*: after slaying; *dhārtarāṣṭrān*: sons of Dhritarashtra; *naḥ*: to us; *kā*: what; *prītiḥ*: pleasure; *syāt*: may be; *janārdana*: janaardana; *pāpam*: sins; *eva*: only; *āśrayet*: will take hold; *asmān*: us; *hatvā*: after killing; *etān*: these; *ātātāyinaḥ*: wrong-doers

1.36 *What pleasure will we get by destroying the sons of Dhritarashtra, Janardana? Only sin will overcome us if we slay these wrong doers.*

Vñ\_mPnhm d` \$hV6YmV@mi sñnd~mYdmZ<sup>2</sup>&  
ñdOZ\$<h H\$W\$hEdmgU Z: ñ`\_m`\_mYd && 1.37

*tasmān nā 'rhā vayan̄ hantum dhārtarāṣṭrān svabāndhavān |*  
*svajanān̄ hi kathān̄ hatvā sukhinaḥ syāma mād̄hava || 1.37*

*tasmāt*: therefore; *na*: not; *arhāḥ*: justified; *vayaṁ*: we; *hantum*: to kill; *dhārtarāṣṭrān*: the sons of Dhritarashtra; *svabāndhavān*: our friends; *svajānaṁ*: kinsmen; *hi*: for; *katham*: how; *hatvā*: after killing; *sukhinaḥ*: happy; *syāma*: may be; *mādhava*: O Madhava (Krishna)

1.37 Therefore, it is not proper for us to kill the sons of Dhritarashtra and our relations, for how could we be happy after killing our own kinsmen, Madhava?

$\frac{H_{0j}}{H_0} = \frac{V_j}{V_0} \approx 1.38$

yadyapyete na paśyanti lobhopahata cetasaḥ ।  
kulaksayakṛtaṁ doṣaṁ mitradrohe ca pātakam ॥ 1.38

*yadyapi*: if; *ete*: these; *na*: not; *paśyanti*: see; *lobhopahata*: greed overtaken; *cetasaḥ*: intelligence; *kulakṣayakṛtām*: in killing the race done; *doṣaṁ*: fault; *mitradrohe*: treason to friends; *ca*: and; *pātakam*: sin

1.38 O Janardana, these men, blinded by greed, see no fault in killing one's family or being treasonable to friends, incur sin.

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ḤṣṢṢZ kô\_ñ\_ṛ^: nṃṃṃKñ\_ṛḥḍ{VṢṢ 2Ṣ  
Ḥḥbj`ḤṢṢXṃṢṢānī`{00ṢṢKṢ ṢṢ 1.39

*katham na jñeyam asmābhiḥ pāpād asmān nivartitum |*  
*kulakṣaya kṛtaṃ doṣaṃ prapaśyadbhir janārdana || 1.39*

*katham*: why; *na*: not; *jñeyam*: to be understood; *asmābhiḥ*: by us; *pāpāt*: from sins; *asmāt*: from this; *nivartitum*: to turn away; *kulakṣaya kṛtaṃ*: destruction of a dynasty; *doṣaṃ*: evil; *prapaśyadbhiḥ*: by the discerning; *janārdana*: Janardana (Krishna)

**1.39 Why should we, who clearly see the sin in the destruction of a dynasty, not turn away from this crime?**

Ḥḥbj`oàUṛ`pṢṢ ḤḥbY\_ṃḡZṃ/VZṃ ṢṢ  
Y\_ṢṢZiṢḤḥṢṢHḡḡY\_ṃḡ^dḡḡ ṢṢ 1.40

*kulakṣaye prapaśyanti kuladharmāḥ sanātanāḥ |*  
*dharme naṣṭe kulaṃ kṛtsnam adharmo 'bhibhavatyuta || 1.40*

*kulakṣaye*: in destroying the family; *prapaśyanti*: perish; *kuladharmāḥ*: the family traditions; *sanātanāḥ*: age-old; *dharme*: virtue; *naṣṭe*: destroyed; *kulaṃ*: family; *kṛtsnam*: whole; *adharmaḥ*: non-righteousness; *abhibhavati*: overtakes; *uta*: and

**1.40 With the destruction of the dynasty, the age-old family traditions die and virtue having been lost, vice overtakes the entire race.**

AY\_ṃḡ^dnḡḡḤḡU àXṢ`pṢṢ Ḥḥb{ó` : ṢṢ  
óṛḡḡXṢḡḡḡḡḡU} Om VḍUḡḡ' a: ṢṢ 1.41

*adharmābhibhavāt kṛṣṇa praduśyanti kula striyaḥ |*  
*strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇasaṃkaraḥ || 1.41*

*adharma*: non-righteousness; *abhi bhavāt*: from the preponderance; *kṛṣṇa*: O Krishna; *praduśyanti*: become corrupt; *kula striyaḥ*: family women; *strīṣu duṣṭāsu*: when women become corrupt; *vārṣṇeya*: O Varshneya (Krishna); *jāyate*: arises; *varṇasaṃkaraḥ*: intermixture of castes

**1.41** *When non-righteous practices become common, O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupt, and with the degradation of womanhood, O Descendant of Vršni, ensues intermixture of castes.*

g' amZaH\$ñ p HbKñZñHbñ` M &  
nVpIV {nVamofñbñ(nÊSñKH\$H\$ m & 1.42

saṁkaro narakāyai 'va kulaghnānām kulasya ca |  
patanti pitaro hyeṣām lupta piṇḍodaka kriyāḥ || 1.42

saṁkaraḥ: mixture; narakāya: for hell; eva: only; kulaghnānām: of the killers of the family; kulasya: of the family; ca: and; patanti: fall; pitaraḥ: forefathers; hi: also; eṣām: their; lupta: deprived; piṇḍodaka: offering of rice to the departed souls water; kriyāḥ: performances

XñfñV; HbKñZñdUg' aH\$ñH\$: &  
CÊgnUVVoOmVY\_mP HbY\_nñ emeVm & 1.43

doṣair etaiḥ kulaghnānām varṇa saṁkarakāraiḥ |  
utsādyante jātīdharmāḥ kuladharmās ca śāśvatāḥ || 1.43

doṣaiḥ: by evil deeds; etaiḥ: these; kulaghnānām: of the destroyer of the family; varṇa saṁkara: mixture of castes; kāraiḥ: by the doers; utsādyante: are destroyed; jāti dharmāḥ: caste rituals; kula dharmāḥ: family traditions; ca: and; śāśvatāḥ: age-old

**1.42, 43** *A mixture of blood damns the destroyers of race and the race itself. Deprived of offering of oblations of rice and water the departed souls of the race also fall, the age-long caste traditions and family customs of the killers of kinsmen become extinct.*

CÊgPHbY\_nññ\_Zñ` mUn\$OZñK? &  
ZaHñ(Z` V\$dmgn^dVrÊ` Zññ` & 1.44

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utsanna kula dharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām janārdana ।  
narake 'niyataṁ vāso bhavati 'tyanuśūruma ॥ 1.44

utsanna: spoiled; kula dharmāṇām: of those who have the family traditions; manuṣyāṇām: of such men; janārdana: O Kṛṣṇa; narake: in hell; aniyataṁ: always; vāsaḥ: residence; bhavati: becomes; iti: thus; anuśūruma: we hear

**1.44 O Janardana, we hear that those who have lost family traditions dwell in hell for an indefinite period of time.**

Ahno~V\_hV²nmn\$H\$V/ni`d{gVmd`\_²&  
`ĐnÁ`gü bmo^Z hV/VjñdOZ\_üVm 1.45

aho bata mahat pāpaṁ kartuṁ vyavasitā vayaṁ ।  
yad rājya sukha lobhena hantuṁ svajanam udyatāḥ ॥ 1.45

aho bata: alas; mahat: great; pāpaṁ: sins; kartuṁ: to do; vyavasitā: prepared; vaya : we; yat: that; rājya: kingdom; sukha lobhena: by greed for kingdom; hantuṁ: to kill; svajanam: kinsmen; udyatāḥ: prepared

**1.45 Alas, we are prepared to commit greatly sinful acts of killing our kinsmen, driven by the desire to enjoy royal happiness.**

`{X\_m\_àVrH\$ma\_eó\$eónnU` : &  
Ym/\$mi\$maUohY`mVY\_oj\_uVa\$^dV²&& 1.46

yadi mām apratikāram āśastraṁ śastrapāṇayaḥ ।  
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyuḥ tan me kṣemataraṁ bhavet ॥ 1.46

yadi: if; mām: me; apratikāram: not resistant; āśastraṁ: unarmed; śastrapāṇayaḥ: with weapons in hand; dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ: the sons of Dhritarashtra; raṇe: in the battle; hanyuḥ: may kill; tat: that; me: mine; kṣemataraṁ: better; bhavet: will be

**1.46 It would be better if the sons of Dhritarashtra, armed with weapons, killed me in battle while I am unarmed and unresisting.**



gÄO` CdmM  
Ed\_ŠEdnOŁ: gL»`oaWmmñW Cnm{deV²k  
{dgÄ` geašMmmšenbšgd¾\_nZg: k& 1.47

sañjaya uvāca

evam uktvā 'rjunaḥ saṁkhye rathopastha upāviśat |  
viṣṭjya saśaraṁ cāpaṁ śokasaṁvignamānasah || 1.47

sañjaya: Sanjaya; uvāca: said; evam: thus; uktvā: having said; arjunaḥ: Arjuna; saṁkhye: in the battle field; rathopastha: chariot at the rear side; upāviśat: sat down; viṣṭjya: having cast aside; saśaraṁ: with the arrow; cāpaṁ: the bow; śoka: sorrow; saṁvigna: distressed; mānasah: with a mind

*1.47 Sanjaya said: Arjuna, whose mind was agitated by grief on the battle field, having spoken thus, cast aside his bow along with the arrow and sat down at the rear portion of the chariot.*

B{V I r\_ØJdØrVmgm{ZfEgw~«-{dÚmì nš`nlemóo  
I rHšUñOŁgšmKo AŒŁ{dfnK` nŷno Zm\_ àW\_nŒŮ` m : Ÿ

iti śrī mad bhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām  
yogaśāstre śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde arjuna viśāda yogo nāma prathamo 'dhyāyah ||

*In the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad gita, the knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the first discourse designated:*

**Arjunaviśāda Yogaḥ**

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## Verses Of Gita Chapter - 2

AW {0Vr`mU`m :

gmſ` `mJ...

**Sāṅkhya Yogah**

gÄO` CdnM &

V\$VWmHh`m@{di>I mJnFflog U\_²&

{dfrXIV{X\$dnſ`\_wmM\_YgyKZ: && 2.1 &&

*sañjaya uvāca*

*taṁ tathā'krpayā viṣṭam āsrupūrṇākulekṣaṇam |*

*viṣīdantaṁ idam vākyam uvāca madhusūdanaḥ || 2.1*

*sañjaya uvāca:* Sanjaya said; *taṁ:* to him; *tathā:* thus; *krpayā:* by pity; *āviṣṭam:* overcome; *āsrupūrṇā:* full of tears; *ākula:* agitated; *īkṣaṇam:* (one with) eyes; *viṣīdantaṁ:* sorrowing; *idam:* this; *vākyam:* word; *uvāca:* said; *madhu-sūdanaḥ:* the killer of Madhu

**2.1 Sanjaya said: As Arjuna's eyes overflowed with tears of pity and despair, Krishna spoke to him thus**

I r ^JdnZdnM

HQVnEdmH\$ſ\_b{X\${df\_og\_mprWV\_²&

AZm`0ir>ñd½\_©²AH\$(VPSa\_OP && 2.2

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*

*kutas tvā kaśmalam idaṁ viṣame samupasthitam |*

*anāryajuṣṭam asvargyam akīrtikaram arjuna || 2.2*

*śrī bhagavān uvāca:* Lord said; *kutaḥ:* why; *tvā:* upon you; *kaśmalam:* delusion; *idaṁ:* this; *viṣame:* in this critical time; *samupasthitam:* arrived; *anārya juṣṭam:* unworthy of a noble soul; *asvargyam:* not leading to heaven; *akīrtikaram:* disgraceful; *arjuna:* O Arjuna

**2.2 Krishna said: Where from has this dejection descended on you at this critical time, Arjuna! You behave unlike a noble man and this will keep you away from realization.**

Śbā` \$ \_mñ\_ J\_ : nmWZVIdæ` mnÚVo&  
j 0\$öX` Xmp`E` \$E` ŠEdmQInö>naVn && 2.3

*klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha nai'tat tvayyupapadyate |  
kṣudraṁ hṛdaya daurbalyaṁ tyaktva' uttiṣṭha paraṁtapa || 2.3*

*klaibyaṁ*: impotence; *mā*: do not; *sma gamaḥ*: yield; *pārtha*: son of Pritha; *na*: not; *etat*: this; *tvayī*: in you; *upapadyate*: is fitting; *kṣudraṁ*: mean; *hṛdaya daurbalyaṁ*: weakness of heart; *tyaktvaa*: after abandoning; *uttiṣṭha*: get up; *paraṁtapa*: destroyer of enemies

**2.3 Do not yield to fear, Partha! It does not befit you. Drop this faint-heartedness and stand up, destroyer of enemies!**

AOQ Cdm  
H\$W\$^rî\_\_h\$gL>` oDnU\$M \_YgyXZ &  
BFQ^: à{V` nñ` n\_ nDmneIagXZ && 2.4

*arjuna uvāca*

*katham bhīṣmam ahaṁ saṁkhye droṇaṁ ca madhusūdana |  
iṣubhiḥ pratiyotsyāmi pūjārḥāv arisūdana || 2.4*

*arjuna uvāca*: Arjuna said; *katham*: how; *bhīṣmam*: Bheesma; *ahaṁ*: I; *saṁkhye*: in battle; *droṇaṁ*: Drona; *ca*: also; *madhusūdana*: O killer of Madhu; *iṣubhiḥ*: with arrows; *pratiyotsyāmi*: shall counterattack; *pūjārḥāu*: the two worthy of worship; *arisūdana*: O killer of the enemies

**2.4 Arjuna said: O killer of Madhu, how can I oppose in battle, Bhishma and Drona who are worthy of my worship?**

Jie\$ZhEdm{h \_hnZV^mclnZ^I ò mo^nsVQ^µ` \_nrh bnbl6 &  
hEdmWf\$M\_njVwJie\$Zhd ^AOr` ^mJmZQYaa{X/Y/nZ&& 2.5

*gurūn ahatvā hi mahānubhāvān śreyo bhoktuṁ bhaikṣyam apī'ha loke |  
hatvā'rthakāmāns tu gurūn ihaiva bhuñjīya bhogān rudhirapradigdhān || 2.5*

*gurūn*: the elders; *ahatvā*: not having killed; *hi*: indeed; *mahānubhāvān*: great souls; *śreyah*: it is better; *bhoktuṁ*: to enjoy life; *bhaikṣyam*: begging; *apī*: even; *iha*: in this life; *loke*: in this world; *hatvā*: after killing; *arthakāmān*: wealth and enjoyment; *tu*: but; *gurūn*: elders; *iha*: in this world; *eva*: only; *bhuñjīya*: has to enjoy; *bhogān*: enjoyable things; *rudhira*: blood; *pradigdhān*: tainted with

**2.5 I would rather beg for my food in this world than kill the most noble of teachers. If I kill them, all my enjoyment of wealth and desires will be stained with blood.**

na cai'tad vidmaḥ kataran no garīyo yad vā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuḥ |  
yān eva hatvā na jijīviṣāmas te'vāsthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ || 2.6

*na*: nor; *cha*: also; *etat*: this; *vidmaḥ*: do know; *katarat*: which; *naḥ*: us; *garīyah*: better; *yat*: what; *vā*: either; *jayema*: shall conquer; *yadi*: if; *vā*: or; *naḥ*: us; *jayeyuḥ*: shall conquer; *yān*: those whom; *eva*: only; *hatvā*: after killing; *na*: never; *jijīviṣāmaḥ*: want to live; *te*: all of them; *avasthitāḥ*: assembled; *pramukhe*: in front of; *dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ*: the sons of Dhritarashtra

*na*: nor; *cha*: also; *etat*: this; *vidmaḥ*: do know; *katarat*: which; *naḥ*: us; *garīyah*: better; *yat*: what; *vā*: either; *jayema*: shall conquer; *yadi*: if; *vā*: or; *naḥ*: us; *jayeyuḥ*: shall conquer; *yān*: those whom; *eva*: only; *hatvā*: after killing; *na*: never; *jijīviṣāmaḥ*: want to live; *te*: all of them; *avasthitāḥ*: assembled; *pramukhe*: in front of; *dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ*: the sons of Dhritarashtra

**2.6 I cannot say which is better; their defeating us or us defeating them. We do not wish to live after slaying the sons of Dhritarashtra who stand before us.**

kārpanyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ prcchāmi tvāṁ dharmasāṁmūḍhacetāḥ |  
yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me śiṣyas te'ham śādhi mām  
tvāṁ prapannam || 2.7

*kārpanyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ* prcchāmi tvāṁ dharmasāṁmūḍhacetāḥ |  
*yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me śiṣyas te'ham śādhi mām*  
*tvāṁ prapannam || 2.7*

*kārpaṇya*: miserly; *doṣa*: weakness; *upahata*: being inflicted by; *svabhāvaḥ*: characteristics; *pr̥cchāmi*: I am asking; *tvām*: you; *dharma*: religion; *saṁmūḍha cetāḥ*: bewildered; *yat*: what; *śreyaḥ*: good; *syāt*: may be; *niścitaṁ*: decidedly; *brūhi*: tell; *tat*: that; *me*: unto me; *śiṣyaḥ*: disciple; *te*: your; *aham*: I am; *śādhī*: just instruct; *mām*: me; *tvām*: you; *prapannam*: surrendered

**2.7 My heart is overwhelmed with pity and my mind is confused about what my duty is. I beg of you, please tell me what is best for me. I am your disciple. Instruct me as I seek refuge in you.**

Z {h ànî` m[ \_\_mnZlÚnX²` ÀNabH\$ àNabFU{pYÐ` mUm ²&  
AdnB` ^y.ndgnEZ\_ÖŠanĀ` ŠgamUm\_{n Mm(YnĒ` \_²&& 2.8

*na hi prapaśyāmi mamā'panudyād yac chokam ucchoṣaṇam indriyāṇām |*  
*avāpya bhūmāvasapatnam ṛddham rājyaṁ surāṇām api cā'dhipatyam || 2.8*

*na*: do not; *hi*: indeed; *prapaśyāmi*: I see; *mama*: my; *apanudyāt*: can drive away; *yat*: that; *śokam*: lamentation; *ucchoṣaṇam*: drying up; *indriyāṇām*: of the senses; *avāpya*: after achieving; *bhūmau*: on the earth; *asapatnam*: without rival; *ṛddham*: prosperous; *rājyaṁ*: kingdom; *surāṇām*: of the demigods; *api*: even; *cha*: also; *ādhīpatyam*: supremacy

**2.8 Even if I were to attain unrivalled dominion and prosperity on earth or even lordship over the Gods, how would that remove this sorrow that burns my senses?**

gĀO` Cdm  
Ed\_ŠEdmÖfrHöŠJŠHö: naVn: &  
Z`nĀn` B{V Jm{dYXŠCSŠEdmVjUt ~^p h && 2.9

*sañjaya uvāca*  
*evam uktvā hr̥ṣīkeśaṁ guḍākeśaḥ param̐tapaḥ |*  
*na yotsya iti govindam uktvā tūṣṇīm babhūva ha || 2.9*

*sañjaya uvācha*: Sañjaya said; *evam*: thus; *uktvā*: after speaking; *hṛṣīkeśam*: unto Krishna, the master of the senses; *guḍākeśaḥ*: Arjuna; *paramtapah*: destroyer of the enemies; *yotsye*: I shall not fight; *iti*: thus; *govindam*: unto Krsihna, the giver of pleasure; *uktvā*: after saying; *tūṣṇīm*: silent; *babhūva*: became; *ha*: clearly

**2.9 Sañjaya said: Arjuna then said to Krishna, ‘Govinda, I shall not fight,’ and fell silent.**

V\_olnM öfrHë: àhg{Pd ^naV &  
gZ`më^`no\_@ o{dfrXIV{X\$dm: && 2.10

*tam uvāca hṛṣīkeśaḥ prahasanniva bhārata |*  
*senayorubhayor madhye viṣīdantam idaṁ vacaḥ || 2.10*

*tam*: unto him; *uvācha*: said; *hṛṣīkeśaḥ*: the master of the senses, Krishna; *prahasan*: smiling; *iva*: like that; *bhārata*: O Dhritarashtra, descendant of Bharata; *senayoḥ*: of the armies; *ubhayoḥ*: of both; *madhye*: between; *viṣīdantam* : unto the lamenting one; *idaṁ*: the following; *vacaḥ*: words

**2.10 Krishna, smilingly spoke the following words to the grief-stricken Arjuna, as they were placed in the middle of both armies.**

I r ^JdnZolnM &  
AenA`mZYdenMnEd\$akndnKñü ^mfgo&  
JVngjZJVngjü ZnZnenMpV npESVm && 2.11

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*  
*aśocyān anvaśocas tvaṁ prajñāvādāmś ca bhāṣase |*  
*gatāsūn agatāsūnś ca nā’nuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ || 2.11*

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*: the Lord said; *aśocyān*: those worthy of lamentation; *anvaśocas*: you are lamenting; *tvaṁ*: you; *prajñāvādām*: learned talks; *cha*: also; *bhāṣase*: you are speaking; *gatāsūn*: lost life; *agatāsūn*: not past life; *ca*: also; *nā*: never; *anuśocanti*: lament; *paṇḍitāḥ*: the learned

**2.11 Bhagavān said:** *You grieve for those that should not be grieved for and yet, you speak words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.*

na tvevā'haṁ jātu nā'saṁ na tvaṁ ne'me janādhipāḥ |  
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vāyam ataḥ param || 2.12

na tvevā'haṁ jātu nā'saṁ na tvaṁ ne'me janādhipāḥ |  
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vāyam ataḥ param || 2.12

na: not; tu: but; eva: only; ahaṁ: I; jātu: at any time; na: not; āsaṁ: existed; na: it is not so; tvaṁ: yourself; na: not; ime: all these; janādhipāḥ: kings; na: never; ca: also; eva: only; na: not like that; bhaviṣyāmaḥ: shall exist; sarve: all of us; vāyam: we; ataḥ param: hereafter

**2.12 It is not that at anytime in the past I did not exist. So did you and these rulers exist, and we shall not ever cease to be hereafter.**

dehino'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanam jarā |  
tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati || 2.13

dehino'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanam jarā |  
tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati || 2.13

dehinaḥ: of the embodied soul; asmin: in this; yathā: as; dehe: in the body; kaumāraṁ: boyhood; yauvanam: youth; jarā: old age; tathā: similarly; dehāntara: transference of the body; prāptiḥ: achievement; dhīraḥ: the brave; tatra: thereupon; na: never; muhyati: is deluded

**2.13 Just as the spirit in this body passes through childhood, youth and old age, so does it pass into another body; the man centered in himself does not fear this.**

AmJ\_mnmf`Zm{ZÉ`m VgfnV{Vj ñd ^naV && 2.14

mātrāspārśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇa sukha duḥkadāḥ |  
āgamāpāyino'nityāḥ tāms titikṣasva bhārata || 2.14

mātrā: of the senses; spārśāḥ: contact; tu: only; kaunteya: O son of Kunti; śīta: cold; uṣṇa: hot; sukha: pleasure; dukkha-dah: giving pain; āgama: appearing; apāyinaḥ: disappearing; anityāḥ: nonpermanent; tān: all of them; titikṣasva: tolerate; bhārata: O descendant of the Bharata dynasty

**2.14 O son of Kunti, contact with sense objects causes heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and these have a beginning and an end. O Bharata, these are not permanent; endure them bravely.**

`\$h Z i`W`YÉ`Womef\$neff® &  
g\_XwI gwl \$Yra\$gme\_VÉdm H\$enVo&& 2.15

yaṁ hi na vyathayantyete puruṣam puruṣarṣabha |  
sama duḥkha sukhaṁ dhīraṁ so'mṛtatvāya kalpate || 2.15

yaṁ: whom; hi: indeed; na: never; vyathayanti: are distressing; ete: all these; puruṣam: to a person; puruṣarṣabha: O best among men; sama: equal; duḥkha: sorrow; sukhaṁ: happiness; dhīraṁ: brave; saḥ: he; amṛtatvāya: for liberation; kalpate: is fit

**2.15 O chief among men, the brave person to whom all these are not distressing, for whom sorrow and happiness are equal, is fit for liberation.**

ZmgVno{dÚVo^ndnoZm^ndno{dÚVogV: &  
C^`no{n Nīnē/VñEdZ`mōVÍdX(e^: && 2.16

nā'sato vidyate bhāvo nā'bhāvo vidyate sataḥ |  
ubhayor api dṛṣṭo'ntas tvanayos tattvadarśibhiḥ || 2.16



*na*: never; *asataḥ*: of the nonexistent; *vidyate*: there is; *bhāvaḥ*: existence; *na*: never; *abhāvaḥ*: non existence; *vidyate*: there is; *sataḥ*: of the eternal; *ubhayoḥ*: of the two; *api*: verily; *dr̥ṣṭaḥ*: observed; *antaḥ*: essence; *tu*: but; *anayoḥ*: of them; *tattvadarśibhiḥ*: truth by the seers

**2.16 The nonexistent has no being; that which exists never ceases to exist. This truth about both is perceived by those who know the Truth.**

Avānāśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvaṁ idaṁ tatam |  
{dZme\_ī` `ñ` mñ` Z H\$üEH\$V@h@V 2.17

*avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvaṁ idaṁ tatam |*  
*vināśam avyayasya 'sya na kaścīt kartum arhati || 2.17*

*avināśi*: imperishable; *tu*: but; *tat*: that; *viddhi*: know it; *yena*: by whom; *sarvaṁ*: all of the body; *idaṁ*: this; *tataṁ*: pervaded; *vināśaṁ*: destruction; *avyayasya*: of the imperishable; *asya*: of it; *na kaścīt*: no one; *kartum*: to do; *arhati*: is able

**2.17 Know It to be indestructible by which all this body is pervaded. Nothing can destroy It, the Imperishable.**

Antavanta ime dehā nityasyo 'ktāḥ śarīraṇaḥ |  
AZm(eZmēā\_ōñ` Vñ\_mÜÜ`ñd ^mV 2.18

*antavanta ime dehā nityasyo 'ktāḥ śarīraṇaḥ |*  
*anāśīno 'prameyasya tasmād yudhyasva bhārata || 2.18*

*antavantaḥ*: perishable; *ime*: all these; *dehāḥ*: bodies; *nityasya*: eternal in existence; *uktāḥ*: it is so said; *śarīraṇaḥ*: the embodied soul; *anāśīnaḥ*: never to be destroyed; *aprameyasya*: immeasurable; *tasmāt*: therefore; *yudhyasva*: fight; *bhārata*: O descendant of Bharata

**2.18 These bodies of the material energy are perishable. The energy itself is eternal, incomprehensible and indestructible. Therefore, fight, O Bharata.**

ya enaṁ vetti hantāraṁ yaś cai 'naṁ manyate hatam |  
ubhau tau na vijānīto nā 'yaṁ hanti na hanyate || 2.19

2.19 *Neither understands; he who takes the Self to be the slayer nor he who thinks he is slain. He who knows the truth understands that the Self does not slay, nor is It slain.*

na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin  
nā 'yaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ ।  
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato'yaṁ purāṇo  
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre ॥ 2.20

*2.20 The Self is neither born nor does It ever die. After having been, It never ceases not to be. It is unborn, eternal, changeless and ancient. It is not killed when the body is killed.*

vedā 'vināśinam nityam ya enam ajam avyayam |  
katham sa puruṣaḥ pārtha kaṁ ghātayati hanti kam || 2.21

veda: knows; avināśinam: indestructible; nityam: permanent; yaḥ: one who; enam: this (soul); ajam: unborn; avyayam: immutable; katham: how; saḥ: he; puruṣaḥ: person; pārtha: O Partha (Arjuna); kam: whom; ghātayati: hurts; hanti: kills; kam: whom

**2.21 O Paartha, how can man slay or cause others to be slain, when he knows It to be indestructible, eternal, unborn, and unchangeable?**

dmgnfG OrUnfZ `Wm{dhm` ZdmZ Jf mV ZamnamU &  
VWmearamU {dhm` OrUnfP Y` mZ gS mV ZdmZ Xbr && 2.22

vāsāmsi jīrṇāni yathā viḥāya navāni grhṇāti naro 'parāṇi |  
tathā śarīrāṇi viḥāya jīrṇāni anyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī || 2.22

vāsāmsi: garments; jīrṇāni: old and worn out; yathā: as; viḥāya: after giving up; navāni: new garments; grhṇāti: does accept; naraḥ: a man; aparāṇi: others; tathā: in the same way; śarīrāṇi: bodies; viḥāya: after giving up; jīrṇāni: old and useless; anyāni: different; saṁyāti: accepts; navāni: new sets; dehī: the embodied soul

**2.22 Just as man casts off his worn out clothes and puts on new ones, the Self casts off worn out bodies and enters newer ones.**

ZfZS(NfXfV eómU ZfZSxh(V nmdHS: &  
Z MZfSfSbX` YfE` mnmZ enf` {V \_mēV: && 2.23

nai 'nam chindanti śastrāṇi nai 'nam dahati pāvakaḥ |  
na cai 'nam kledayantyāpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ || 2.23

na: not; enam: this (soul); chindanti: cut to pieces; śastrāṇi: weapons; na: not; enam: this soul; dahati: burns; pāvakaḥ: fire; na: not; ca: also; enam: this soul; kledayanti: moistens; āpaḥ: water; na: not; śoṣayati: dries; mārutaḥ: wind

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**2.23 Weapons do not cleave the Self, fire does not burn It, water does not moisten It and wind does not dry It.**

AÀNúŋē`\_Xmōmē`\$AŠbúŋē` Ed M ų  
{ZĒ` : gd9V: nŴnUw AMbmē` \$gZmVZ: 2.24

acchedyo yam adāhyo 'yam akledyo 'śoṣya eva ca |  
nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthāṇuḥ acalo 'yam sanātanaḥ || 2.24

acchedyaḥ: incapable of being cut; ayaṁ: this soul; adāhyaḥ: cannot be burned; ayaṁ: this soul; akledyaḥ: insoluble; aśoṣyaḥ: cannot be dried; eva: certainly; ca: and; nityaḥ: everlasting; sarvagataḥ: all-pervading; sthāṇuḥ: unchangeable; acalaḥ: immovable; ayaṁ: this soul; sanātanaḥ: eternally the same

**2.24 The Self cannot be broken nor burnt nor dissolved nor dried up. It is eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable and ancient.**

Ai`°\$mē`\_{MYĒ` mē` \$A{dH\$m nē` \_\_A` Vo ų  
Vñ\_nKd\${d{XĒdZ\$ZmZmē`MVw\_hŋg 2.25

avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam avikāryo 'yam ucyate |  
tasmād evaṁ viditvai 'naṁ nā 'nuśocitum arhasi || 2.25

avyaktaḥ: unmanifest; ayaṁ: this; acintyaḥ: unthinkable; ayaṁ: this; avikāryaḥ: immutable; ayaṁ: this; ucyate: is spoken of; tasmāt: therefore; evaṁ: as such; viditvā: having known; enaṁ: this; na: not; anuśocitum arhasi: (you) should not grieve

**2.5 The Self is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable and unchangeable and able. Knowing this to be such, you should not grieve.**

AW MZ\$ZÈ` Om/\$ZÈ` \$dm\_Ÿ` go\_Ÿ` ²Ÿ  
VWm(n Èd\$\_hm-nhmZ\$semMVu hŸg 2.26

*atha cai 'naṁ nityajātaṁ nityaṁ vā manyase mṛtaṁ |*  
*tathā 'pi tvaṁ mahābāho nai 'naṁ śocitum arhasi || 2.26*

*atha*: however; *ca*: also; *enaṁ*: this soul; *nityajātaṁ*: always born; *nityaṁ*: forever; *vā*: either; *manyase*: think; *mṛtaṁ*: dead; *tathā api*: still; *tvam*: you; *mahābāho*: O mighty-armed one; *na*: not; *enaṁ*: like this ; *śocitum arhasi*: you lament

**2.26 O mighty-armed, even if you should think of the soul as being constantly born and constantly dying, even then, you should not lament.**

Om/n` {h Ymno\_È`w. Ym\$OŸ\_ Ÿ/n` M Ÿ  
Vñ\_nKn[ahmì \$W]Z Èd\$semMVu hŸg 2.27

*jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyuḥ dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca |*  
*tasmād aparihārye 'rthe na tvaṁ śocitum arhasi || 2.27*

*jātasya*: one who has taken his birth; *hi*: indeed; *dhruvo*: certain; *mṛtyuḥ*: death; *dhruvaṁ*: certain; *janma*: birth; *mṛtasya*: of the dead; *ca*: also; *tasmāt*: therefore; *aparihārye*: for that which is unavoidable; *arthe*: in the matter of; *na*: do not; *tvam*: you; *śocitum arhasi*: you lament

**2.27 Indeed, death is certain for the born and birth is certain for the dead. Therefore, you should not grieve over the inevitable.**

Ai`°\$Xr{Z ^ŸmZ i`°\$Ü` mZ ^mV Ÿ  
Ai`°\$ZYZm` d VÌ H\$m n[aXodZm 2.28

*avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyakta madhyāni bhārata |*  
*avyaktanidhanāny eva tatra kā paridevanā || 2.28*

*avyaktādīni*: unmanifest in the beginning; *bhūtāni*: living beings; *vyakta*: manifest; *madhyāni*: in the middle; *bhārata*: O descendant of Bharata; *avyakta nidhanāni*: unmanifest after death; *eva*: like that; *tatra*: therefore; *kā*: what; *paridevanā*: lamentation

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2.28 O Bharata, being intangible in the beginning, being intangible again in their end, seemingly tangible in the middle, what are we grieving about?

Amü`@Ení` {V H\$üXZ\$Amü`@ÜX{V VWp MmY` : &  
Amü`@fZ\_Y` : ünUnqV I tcdn` z\$dx Z Mpl H\$üV`& 2.29

āścaryavat paśyati kaścīd enam āścaryavad vadati tathai 'va cā 'nyaḥ |  
āścaryavac cai 'nam anyāḥ śṛṇoti śrutvā 'py enam veda na cai 'va kaścīt || 2.29

āścaryavat: amazingly; paśyati: see; kaścīt: some one; enam: this soul; āścaryavac: amazingly; vadati: speaks; tathā: liked that; eva: only; ca: also; anyāḥ: another; āścaryavat: amazingly; ca: also; enam: this soul; anyāḥ: another; śṛṇoti: hear; śrutvā: having heard; api: even; enam: this soul; veda: do know; na: not; ca: and; eva: only; kaścīt: someone

2.29 One sees It as a wonder, another speaks of It as a wonder, another hears of It as a wonder. Yet, having heard, none understands It at all.

Xhr {ZĒ`\_dÜ` m` \$Xhngdfr` ^mV &  
Vñ\_nĕgdn@ ^ymZ Z Ēd\$enMV\_w hĕg & 2.30

dehī nityam avadhyo 'yaṁ dehe sarvasya bhārata |  
tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvaṁ śocitum arhasi || 2.30

dehī: the soul; nityam: eternally; avadhyāḥ: cannot be killed; yaṁ: this soul; dehe: in the body; sarvasya: of everyone; bhārata: O descendant of Bharata; tasmāt: therefore; sarvāṇi: all; bhūtāni: living entities (that are born); na: not; tvaṁ: yourself; śocitum arhasi: should grieve

2.30 O Bharata, This that dwells in the body of everyone can never be destroyed; do not grieve for any creature.

ñdY ©{n Mndu` Z {dH\$ānVw hēg &  
Yā` nŌ` ŌnANō mē` Ēj {Ī` ñ` Z {dŪVo&& 2.31

svadharmam api cā 'veksya  
na vikampitum arhasi |  
dharmyādd hi yuddhāc chreyo 'nyat  
kṣatriyasya na vidyate || 2.31

svadharmañ: one's own duty; api: also; ca: and; aveksya: considering; na: not; vikampitum: to hesitate; arhasi: you deserve; dharmyāt hi yuddhāt: from righteous war indeed; śreyaḥ: better; anyat: anything else; kṣatriyasya: of the kṣatriya; na: does not; vidyate: exist

**2.31 You should look at your own duty as a kṣatriya. There is nothing higher for a kṣatriya than a righteous war. You ought not to hesitate.**

`ÑAN>m MmnP\$ñdJŌma \_nmW\_ 2 &  
gŭl Z: j {Ī` m nmW^b^VVo` Ō\_rÑe\_ 2 && 2.32

yadṛcchayā co 'papannañ svargadvāram apāvṛtam |  
sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha labhante yuddham īdṛśam || 2.32

yadṛcchayā: by its own accord; ca: also; upapannañ: arrived; svargadvāram: gate of heaven; apāvṛtam: wide open; sukhinaḥ: happy; kṣatriyāḥ: the members of the royal order; pārtha: O son of Pritha; labhante: achieve; yuddham: war; īdṛśam: like this

**2.32 O Partha, happy indeed are the kṣatriya who are called to fight in such a battle without seeking. This opens for them the door to heaven.**

AW Mōd{\_\_\$Yā` ^g\$lm\_\$Z H\$āi` {g &  
VV: ñdY\_ ^H\$V^M {hEdmnmn\_dnñ` {g && 2.33

atha cet tvam imañ dharmyañ saṁgrāmañ na kariṣyasi |  
tataḥ svadharmāñ kīrtiñ ca hitvā pāpam avāpsyasi || 2.33

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*atha*: therefore; *cet*: if; *tvaṁ*: you; *imaṁ*: this; *dharmyaṁ*: righteous; *saṁgrāmaṁ*: war; *na*: do not; *karisyasi*: you will perform; *tataḥ*: then; *svadharmam*: your duty; *kīrtiṁ*: reputation; *ca*: also; *hitvā*: having lost; *pāpaṁ*: sin; *avāpsyasi*: do gain

**2.33** *If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will incur sin having abandoned your own duty, and you will lose your reputation.*

AH\$V#m(n ^v/nZ H\$N{\`î`pV V@i` `m\_2`&  
g\$`n(dVñ` MnH\$V@\_aUnK{V[aA`Vo&& 2.34

*akīrtiṁ cā 'pi bhūtāni kathayisyanti te'vyayām |*  
*sambhāvitasya cā 'kīrtiḥ maraṇād atiricyate || 2.34*

*akīrtiṁ*: infamy; *ca*: also; *api*: also; *bhūtāni*: all people; *kathayisyanti*: will speak; *te*: of you; *avyayām*: undying; *sambhāvitasya*: of a respectable man; *ca*: also; *akīrtiḥ*: ill-fame; *marañāt*: than death; *atiricyate*: becomes more than

**2.34** *People too will remember your everlasting dishonor and to one who has been honored, dishonor is worse than death.*

^`nDUmXmaV\$`\$`YVoEdn\$\_hnaVnm`&  
`fnsM`Ed\$~hVno^fdm`nn`{g`bnKd\_2`&& 2.35

*bhayād raṇād uparataṁ maṁsyante tvāṁ mahārathāḥ |*  
*yeṣāṁ ca tvāṁ bahumato bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam || 2.35*

*bhayāt*: out of fear; *raṇāt*: from war; *uparataṁ*: retired; *maṁsyante*: will consider; *tvāṁ*: you; *mahārathāḥ*: the great generals; *yeṣāṁ*: of those who; *ca*: also; *tvaṁ*: you; *bahumataḥ*: in great estimation; *bhūtvā*: having become; *yāsyasi*: will get; *lāghavam*: decreased in value

**2.35** *The great generals will think that you have withdrawn from the battle because you are a coward. You will be looked down upon by those who had thought much of you and your heroism in the past.*



AdnA` dnKnũ ~hŷd(Xi` pŷV Vdm(hVm ŷ  
{ZŶXVñVd gm\_Ŷ` aVVnoXwI Va\$Zw(H\$ \_2ŷ&& 2.36

avācyavādānś ca bahūn vadiṣyanti tavā 'hitāḥ |  
nindantas tava sāmāthyam tato duḥkhataram nu kim || 2.36

avācyavādān: unspeakable words; ca: also; bahūn: many; vadiṣyanti: will say; tava: your; ahitāḥ: enemies; nindantaḥ: while vilifying; tava: your; sāmāthyam: ability; tataḥ: than that; duḥkhataram: more painful; nu: of course; kim: what

**2.36 Many unspeakable words would be spoken by your enemies reviling your power. Can there be anything more painful than this?**

hVno dm ànBn` {g ñdJª {OĒdm dm ^mú` go\_hr\_2ŷ&  
Vñ\_nKŷŷmR>H\$ŷVò `ŷdm` H\$V{Zü` : ŷ&& 2.37

hato vā prāpsyasi svargam jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm |  
tasmād uttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛta nīścayaḥ || 2.37

hataḥ: being killed; vā: either; prāpsyasi: you will gain; svargam: heaven; jitvā: after conquering; vā: or; bhokṣyase: you will enjoy; mahīm: the world; tasmād: therefore; uttiṣṭha: get up; kaunteya: O son of Kunti; yuddhāya: for war; kṛta nīścayaḥ: determined

**2.37 Slain, you will achieve heaven; victorious, you will enjoy the earth. O son of Kunti, stand up determined to fight.**

gŷ XwI og\_oHĒdm bmm^mbm^mO` nO` mŷ&  
VVno ŷdm` ŷŷ` ñd Zp\$nmn\_dnBn` {g ŷ&& 2.38

sukha duḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau |  
tato yuddhāya yujyasva nai 'vaṁ pāpam avāpsyasi || 2.38

sukha duḥkhe: in happiness as well as in distress; same: equal; kṛtvā: doing so; lābhālābhau: gain and loss; jayājayau: victory and defeat; tataḥ: thereafter; yuddhāya: for war; yujyasva: get ready; na: not; evaṁ: in this way; pāpam: sin; avāpsyasi: you will gain

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2.38 *Pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat – treat them all the same. Do battle for the sake of battle and you shall incur no sin.*

EfmVø{^hVmgn\$`o~(Ö`n)OpEd\_n\$|Uw&  
~ÖÇm`P\$no`mnWqH\$\_@Y\$ähnn`{g && 2.39

eṣā te 'bhihitā sāmkhye buddhir yoge tv imām śṛṇu |  
buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karma bandhaṁ prahāsyasi || 2.39

eṣā: all these; te: you; abhihitā: described; sāmkhye: in the Sankhya Yoga (yoga of knowledge); buddhiḥ: intelligence; yoge: in the Karma Yoga of selfless action; tu: but; imām: this; śṛṇu: hear; buddhyā: by intelligence; yuktaḥ: equipped; yayā: by which; pārtha: O son of Pritha; karma bandhaṁ: bondage of action; prahāsyasi: you shall throw off

2.39 *What has been taught to you concerns the wisdom of Sāṅkhya. Now, listen to the wisdom of yoga. Having known this, O Partha, you shall cast off the bonds of action.*

Zbnq^H\$\_ZmenpñV àĒ`dm`noZ {dÚVo&  
ñdēn\_ß`ñ`Y\_ŕ`Îm Vo\_hVno^`nVŕ && 2.40

ne 'hā 'bhikramanāśo 'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate |  
svalpam apyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt || 2.40

na: there is not; iha: in this path (of selfless action); abhikramanāśaḥ: loss of effort; asti: there is; pratyavāyaḥ: contrary result; na: not; vidyate: there is; svalpam: a little; api: also; asya: of this discipline; dharmasya: of this occupation; trāyate: releases; mahataḥ: of very great; bhayāt: from fear

2.40 *There is no wasted effort or dangerous effect from this. Even a little knowledge of this, even a little practice of yoga, protects one from great fear.*

ī` dgm̃ mē\_H\$~(Ōabāh HāēZYXZ &  
~hēml mōZYVnū ~Ō` mēi` dgm̃ Zm\_2&& 2.41

vyavasāyātmikā buddhir eke 'ha kuru nandana |  
bahuśākhā hyanantās ca buddhaya 'vyavasāyinām || 2.41

vyavasāyātmikā: fixed resolve; buddhiḥ: intelligence; ekā: only one; iha: in this (Karma Yoga); kuru nandana: O son of the Kurus; bahuśākhāḥ: various branches; hi: indeed; anantāḥ: unlimited; ca: also; buddhayaḥ: intelligence; avyavasāyinām: of the undecided (ignorant men moved by desires)

**2.41 Joy of the Kurus, all you need is single-pointed determination. Thoughts of the irresolute are many, branched and endless.**

`m̃\_n\$np̃nVn\$dm̃\$ādXYē` {dn{üV: &  
d&dm̃KaVm̃ nm̃V`Zñ` XñVr{Vdm̃{XZ: && 2.42

yām imām puṣpitām vācam̃ pravadyanty avipaścitaḥ |  
vedavādaratāḥ pārtha nā 'nyad asti 'ti vādinaḥ || 2.42

yām imām: all these; puṣpitām: flowery; vācam̃: words; pravadyanti: say; avipaścitaḥ: ignorant men; vedavādaratāḥ: devoted to the letter of the Veda; pārtha: O son of Partha; na: not; anyat: anything else; asti: there is; iti: thus; vādinaḥ: advocates

**2.42 Foolish ones speak a lot, taking pleasure in the eulogizing words of Vedas, O Partha, saying, 'There is nothing else.'**

H\$~mē\_nZ: ñdJ\$am̃OY\_H\$\_SbāXm\_2&  
{H\$~m̃{def~h̃p̃n\$^m̃p̃e`9qV à{V && 2.43

kāmātmānaḥ svargaparāḥ janma karma phala pradām |  
kriyā viśeṣa bahulām bhogaiśvarya gatiṁ prati || 2.43

kāmātmānaḥ: desirous of sense gratification; svargaparāḥ: aiming at heaven as supreme goal; janma karma phala pradām: resulting in rebirth as the fruit; kriyā viśeṣa bahulām: many rituals of various kinds; bhogaiśvarya: sense enjoyment opulence; gatiṁ: way; prati: towards

2.43 Men of little knowledge are very much attached to the flowery words of the Vedas which recommend various fruitful activities for elevation to heavenly planets, resulting in good birth, power, and so forth. Being desirous of sense gratification and opulent life, they say that there is nothing more than this to living.

^m\pe` 8g°\$nzfV` mñöVM\gm\_2`k  
i` dgm` mE`H\$m~Ö: g\_mY`Z {dYr` Vo&& 2.44

bhogaiśvarya prasaktānām tayā 'pahṛtacetasām |  
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate || 2.44

*bhogaiśvarya*: material enjoyment opulence; *prasaktānām*: of those who are so attached; *tayā*: by such words; *apahṛta cetasām*: bewildered in mind; *vyavasāyātmikā*: fixed determination; *buddhiḥ*: intellect; *samādhau*: in the supreme goal; *na*: not; *vidhīyate*: centers on

2.44 Those whose minds are diverted and who are not determined are not fit for steady meditation and **samādhi**.

İjüf` {df` mdkm{Zóüf` m^dnO2` k  
{ZÜÜm(ZE` gİdnVmo{Z` n}j o AnE` dnZ2`&& 2.45

traiguṇya viṣayā vedā nistraiguṇyo bhavā 'rjuna |  
nirdvandvo nitya sattvastho niryogakṣema ātmavān || 2.45

*traiguṇya viṣayā*: pertaining to the three modes of material nature and the means of achieving them; *vedā*: Vedic literature; *nistraiguṇyaḥ*: indifferent to the material enjoyments and their means; *bhava*: be; *arjuna*: O Arjuna; *nirdvandvaḥ*: free from the pairs of opposites; *nitya sattvasthaḥ*: ever remaining in *satva* (eternal existence); *niryogakṣemaḥ*: free from (the thought of) acquisition and preservation; *ātmavān*: established in the Self

2.45 O Arjuna! Be you above the three attributes that the Vedas deal in; free yourself from the pairs-of-opposites and be always in **satva** (goodness), free from all thoughts of acquisition or preservation and be established in the Self.

Yāvan artha udapāne sarvataḥ saṁplutodake ।  
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ ॥ 2.46

yāvān artha udapāne sarvataḥ saṁplutodake ।  
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ ॥ 2.46

yāvān: how much; arthaḥ: means; udapāne: in a well of water; sarvataḥ: on all sides; saṁplutodake: in a great reservoir of water; tāvān: that much; sarveṣu: in all; vedeṣu: in the Veda; brāhmaṇasya: of the man who knows the supreme Brahman; vijānataḥ: of one who has achieved enlightenment

**2.46 The sage who has known the Self has little use for the vedic scriptures as these are like a pool of water in a place which is already in flood.**

Karmaṇyevā 'dhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana ।  
mā karma phala hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stvakarmaṇi ॥ 2.47

karmaṇyevā 'dhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana ।  
mā karma phala hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stvakarmaṇi ॥ 2.47

karmaṇi: in the duties; eva: only; adhikāraḥ: right; te: of you; mā: never; phaleṣu: in the fruits; kadācana: at any time; mā: never; karma phala: in the result of action; hetuḥ: cause; bhūḥ: let be; mā: never; te: of you; saṅgaḥ: attachment; astu: be there; akarmaṇi: in inaction

**2.47 You have a right only to work, but never to its outcome. Let not the outcome be your motive; but do not move into inaction.**

Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanamjaya ।  
siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate ॥ 2.48

yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanamjaya ।  
siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate ॥ 2.48

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*yogasthaḥ*: steadfast in yoga; *kuru*: perform; *karmāṇi*: duties; *saṅgaṁ*: attachment; *tyaktvā*: having abandoned; *dhanamjaya*: O Dhananjaya; *siddhyasiddhyoḥ*: success and failure; *samaḥ*: the same; *bhūtvā*: having become; *śamatvaṁ*: evenness of mind; *yoga*: yoga; *ucyate*: is called

**2.48 O Dhananjaya! Do what you have to do with no attachment to outcome, being centered in yoga. Be balanced in success and failure. Evenness of mind is yoga.**

XqW øda\$H\$\_@Q`mOZÄO` V&  
~ÖipeaU\_p'IdÄN>H\$Um \sbhv/d: V& 2.49

*dūreṇa hyavaraṁ karma buddhiyogād dhanamjaya |*  
*buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ || 2.49*

*dūreṇa hi avaraṁ*: far superior; *karma*: activities; *buddhiyogāt*: based on the yoga of knowledge; *dhanamjaya*: O conqueror of wealth; *buddhau*: in such wisdom; *śaraṇam*: full surrender; *anviccha*: desire; *kṛpaṇāḥ*: wretched; *phalahetavaḥ*: those desiring fruit of action

**2.49 O Dhananjaya, beyond the yoga of wisdom, is action. Wretched are those whose motive is the outcome; surrender yourself to wisdom.**

~Ö`P\$noOhn/rh C^ogH\$XüH\$Vo&  
Vñ\_nÜnmì `Ä`ñd `nol: H\$\_gWHSpeb\_2V& 2.50

*buddhiyukto jahātī 'ha ubhe sukṛta duṣkṛte |*  
*tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam || 2.50*

*buddhiyuktaḥ*: even minded person; *jahāti*: gives up; *iha*: in this life; *ubhe*: in both; *sukṛta duṣkṛte*: in good and bad results; *tasmāt*: therefore; *yogāya*: for the sake of yoga; *yujyasva*: be so engaged; *yogaḥ*: in yoga; *karmasu*: in all activities; *kauśalam*: art (of freeing the Self from the bondage of action)

**2.50 Endowed with the wisdom of evenness of mind, move away from both good and evil deeds in this life. Devote yourself to yoga. Skill in action is yoga.**

ḤṢ\_ṢṢ~(Ö`ṢṢ{h \ṢṢĒ`ŠĒdm\_Zr{fU: Ṣ  
OY\_~Y{d{Z\_ṢṢ nXṢJĀNṢĒ`Zm`\_2ṢṢ 2.51

*karmajaṁ buddhiyuktā hi phalaṁ tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ |  
janma bandha vinirmuktāḥ padaṁ gacchantyanāmayam || 2.51*

*karmajaṁ*: born of action; *buddhiyuktā*: even minded ones; *hi*: indeed; *phalaṁ*: results; *tyaktvā*: after giving up; *manīṣiṇaḥ*: sages; *janma bandha vinirmuktāḥ*: free from the bondage of birth; *padaṁ*: position; *gacchanti*: reach; *anāmayam*: without ills

**2.51** *The wise, having abandoned the outcome of their actions and possessed of knowledge, are freed from the cycle of birth and death. They go to the state which is beyond all sorrow.*

`XmVo\_nṢṢbbṢ~(Öi`ṢṢVāi`{V Ṣ  
VXmJYVṢg {ZdXṢI nṢi`n` I Wñ` M ṢṢ 2.52Ṣ

*yadā te moha kalilaṁ buddhir vyatitariṣyati |  
tadā gantāsi nirvedaṁ śrotavyasya śrutasya ca || 2.52*

*yadā*: when; *te*: your; *moha kalilaṁ*: slough of delusion; *buddhiḥ*: understanding; *vyatitariṣyati*: will pass through; *tadā*: at that time; *gantāsi*: you shall attain; *nirvedaṁ*: cheerlessness; *śrotavyasya*: all that is to be heard; *śrutasya*: all that is already heard; *ca*: also

**2.52** *When your wisdom takes you beyond delusion, you shall be indifferent to what has been heard and what is yet to be heard.*

I Ṣ{dā{VṢmVo`XmñWñ`{V {ZübmṢ  
g\_mYmṢbm~(Ö: VXm`mṢdnñ`{g ṢṢ 2.53

*śrutivipratipannā te yadā sthāsyati niścālā |  
samādhāvacalā buddhiḥ tadā yogam avāpsyasi || 2.53*

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*śrutivipratipannā*: confused by much hearing; *te*: this; *yadā*: when; *sthāsyati*: rests; *niścalā*: steady; *samādhau*: on God; *acalā*: unflinching; *buddhiḥ*: intellect; *tadā*: at that time; *yogaṁ*: self-realization; *avāpsyasi*: you will achieve

**2.53** *When you are not confused by what you have heard and your wisdom stands steady and unmoving in the Self, you shall attain Self-realization.*

AOZ CdmM  
pñVVàkñ` H\$m ^mfmg\_mYñWñ` Hòed &  
pñVVYr: qH\$ à^mfV {H\$\_mgrV dOW {H\$\_2^&& 2.54

*arjuna uvāca*  
*sthitaprajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhisthasya keśava ।*  
*sthitadhīḥ kiṁ prabhāṣeta kim āsīta vrajeta kim ॥ 2.54*

*arjuna uvāca*: Arjuna said; *sthitaprajñasya*: of one who is of secure mind; *kā*: what; *bhāṣā*: language; *samādhisthasya*: of one established in the tranquility of mind; *keśava*: O Krishna; *sthitadhīḥ*: one with stable mind; *kiṁ*: how; *prabhāṣeta*: speak; *kim*: how; *āsīta*: sits; *vrajeta*: walks; *kim*: how

**2.54** *O Kesava! What is the description of one who stays in the present moment and is merged in the awareness of truth and wisdom? How does one of steady wisdom speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?*

I r ^JdmZdmM &  
àOhm(V `XmH\$m\_mZ^gdm^2nmV©\_Zm/VmZ^2&  
AnĒ\_Ÿ` chĒ\_Zm Vm> pñVVàkñVXmĀ` Vo&& 2.55

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*  
*prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha manogatān ।*  
*ātmanyevā ’tmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthitaprajñas tado ’cyate ॥ 2.55*



śrī bhagavān uvāca: The Lord said; prajahāti: gives up; yadā: when; kāmān: desires; sarvān: of all varieties; pārtha: O son of Pritha; manogatān: existing in mind; ātmani: in the soul; eva: only; ātmanā: by the self; tuṣṭaḥ: satisfied; sthitaprajñāḥ: one of secure understanding; tadā: at that time; ucyate: is said

**2.55 Sri Bhagavān said: O Partha, a man who casts off completely all the desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self by the Self, He is said to be one of steady wisdom.**

XwI ôdZ(Ü¾\_Zm gwl fwl(dJVñnh: &  
drVamJ^`HñW: pñVWYr\_@ZéÀ`VoV&& 2.56

duḥkheṣvanudvignamanāḥ sukheṣu vigatasprhaḥ |  
vīta rāga bhaya krodhaḥ sthitadhīr munir ucyate || 2.56

duḥkheṣu: in sorrow; anudvignamanāḥ: without being agitated in mind; sukheṣu: in happiness; vigatasprhaḥ: without being interested; vīta: free from; rāga: passion; bhaya: fear; krodhaḥ: anger; sthitadhīḥ: one who is steady in mind; muniḥ: a sage; ucyate: is called

**2.56 He whose mind is not disturbed by adversity and who, in prosperity, does not go after other pleasures, he who is free from attachment, fear or anger is called a sage of steady wisdom.**

`: gdPmZ{^ñZhñVñfññ` eññeñ\_2&  
Zñf^ZYX{V Z Üñr>Vñ` àkmñV[öVñ&& 2.57

yaḥ sarvatrā 'nabhisnehas tat-tat prāpya śubhāśubham |  
nā 'bhinandati na dveṣṭi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā || 2.57

yaḥ: one who; sarvatra: everywhere; anabhisnehaḥ: without affection; tat: that; tat: that; prāpya: after achieving; śubhāśubham: good evil; na: not; abhinandati: rejoices; na: not; dveṣṭi: resents; tasya: his; prajñā: knowledge; pratiṣṭhitā: fixed

**2.57 His wisdom is fixed who is everywhere without attachment, meeting with anything good or bad and who neither rejoices nor hates.**

$\text{Xmg}\hat{\text{h}}\text{aVoMm}\hat{\text{S}}\text{H}\hat{\text{S}}\text{m}\text{p}^{\text{m}}\text{mZrd gde: } \&$   
 $\text{Bp}\hat{\text{Y}}\hat{\text{D}}^{\text{m}}\text{Urp}\hat{\text{Y}}\hat{\text{D}}^{\text{m}}\text{V}\hat{\text{h}}^{\text{m}}\text{nVn}^{\text{m}}\hat{\text{a}}\text{km}\hat{\text{a}}\text{V}\{\text{iRVm}\&\& 2.58$

*yadā samharate cā 'yaṁ kūṛmo 'ṅgānī 'va sarvaśaḥ |*  
*indriyāṇī 'ndriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā || 2.58*

*yadā*: when; *samharate*: withdraws; *cā*: also; *ayaṁ*: this; *kūṛmaḥ*: tortoise; *aṅgānī*: limbs; *iva*: like; *sarvaśaḥ*: altogether; *indriyāṇī*: senses; *indriyārthebhyah*: from the sense objects; *tasya*: his; *prajñā*: consciousness; *pratiṣṭhitā*: fixed

**2.58 As the tortoise withdraws its limbs from all sides, when a person withdraws his senses from the sense-objects, his wisdom becomes steady.**

$\{\text{df}^{\text{m}}\text{m}\{\text{d}\{\text{ZdV}\hat{\text{V}}\text{o}\{\text{Zanhn}\hat{\text{m}}^{\text{m}}\text{X}\hat{\text{h}}\text{Z: } \&$   
 $\text{agdO}^{\text{a}}\text{agm}\hat{\text{B}}^{\text{m}}\hat{\text{n}}^{\text{m}}\text{na}\hat{\text{S}}\hat{\text{N}}\hat{\text{i}}\text{O}\hat{\text{h}}\hat{\text{a}}\{\text{ZdV}\hat{\text{V}}\text{o}\&\& 2.59$

*viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ |*  
*rasavarjaṁ raso 'py asya paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate || 2.59*

*viṣayāḥ*: sense objects; *vinivartante*: turn away; *nirāhārasya*: of one who does not enjoy them with his senses; *dehinaḥ*: of the embodied; *rasavarjaṁ*: yearning, persisting; *rasaḥ*: yearning; *api*: although there is; *asya*: his; *paraṁ*: the supreme; *dṛṣṭvā*: after seeing; *nivartate*: returns

**2.59 From the body, the sense objects turn away, but the desires remain; his desires also leave him on seeing the Supreme.**

$\text{V}\text{Vm}\hat{\text{o}}\{\text{n}\text{H}\hat{\text{S}}\hat{\text{p}}\text{V}\hat{\text{o}}\text{nie}\hat{\text{f}}\hat{\text{n}}^{\text{m}}\{\text{dn}\{\hat{\text{U}}\text{V: } \&$   
 $\text{Bp}\hat{\text{Y}}\hat{\text{D}}^{\text{m}}\text{m}\{\text{U}\hat{\text{a}}\text{nVr}\{\text{Z}\text{hap}\hat{\text{V}}\text{ag}^{\text{h}}\hat{\text{S}}\text{Z: } \&\& 2.60$

*yatato hy api kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ |*  
*indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabhaṁ manaḥ || 2.60*

*yatataḥ*: while endeavoring; *hi*: indeed; *api*: also; *kaunteya*: O son of Kunti; *puruṣasya*: of the man; *vipaścitaḥ*: the wise; *indriyāṇi*: the senses; *pramāthīni*: turbulent; *haranti*: carry away; *prasabhaṁ*: by force; *manaḥ*: the mind

**2.60** *O son of Kunti, the turbulent senses carry away the mind of a wise man, though he is striving to be in control.*

VmZ gdmU g\$ ā` `P\$ AngrV \_Ēna: &  
deo(h `n` pīD` mU Vñ` àkmà(V{ōVm && 2.61

*tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yukta āsīta matparaḥ |*  
*vaśe hi yasye 'ndriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā || 2.61*

*tāni*: those senses; *sarvāṇi*: all; *saṁyamya*: keeping under control; *yuktaḥ*: yogi; *āsīta*: sitting; *matparaḥ*: devoted to Me; *vaśe*: in full subjugation; *hi*: indeed; *yasya*: one whose; *indriyāṇi*: senses; *tasya*: his; *prajñā*; mind; *pratiṣṭhitā*: stable

**2.61** *Having restrained them all, he should sit steadfast, intent on Me. His mind is steady in the present whose senses are under control.*

Ü`m Vm{df` nñg: g`ñVfynOm V&  
g`nV²gÄOm VoH\$m\_: H\$m\_nĒH\$mVnē(^Om Vo&& 2.62

*dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣū 'pajāyate |*  
*saṅgāt saṁjāyate kāmāḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate || 2.62*

*dhyāyataḥ*: contemplating; *viṣayān*: sense objects; *puṁsaḥ*: of the person; *saṅgas*: attachment; *teṣu*: in these sense objects; *upajāyate*: develops; *saṅgāt*: from attachment; *saṁjāyate*: develops; *kāmāḥ*: desire; *kāmāt*: from desire; *krodhaḥ*: anger; *abhijāyate*: ensues

**2.62** *When a man thinks of objects, it gives rise to attachment for them. From attachment, desire arises; from desire, anger is born.*

Ḥṛdīḥ gṛhīḥ gṛhīḥ gṛhīḥ gṛhīḥ  
ñṛhīḥ gṛhīḥ gṛhīḥ gṛhīḥ gṛhīḥ 2.63

*krodhād bhavati saṁmohaḥ saṁmohāt smṛtīvibhramaḥ |*  
*smṛti bhraṁśād buddhināśo buddhināś āt praṇāsyati || 2.63*

*krodhāt*: from anger; *bhavati*: takes place; *saṁmohaḥ*: illusion; *saṁmohāt*: from illusion; *smṛti*: of memory; *vibhramaḥ*: loss; *smṛti bhraṁśāt*: from loss of memory; *buddhi nāśaḥ*: loss of reason; *buddhināśāt*: from loss of reason; *praṇāsyati*: perishes

**2.63 From anger arises delusion, from delusion, loss of memory, from loss of memory, the destruction of discrimination, from destruction of discrimination, he perishes.**

amṛtā dīpā dīpā dīpā dīpā dīpā  
Anṛtā dīpā dīpā dīpā dīpā dīpā 2.64

*rāga dveṣa viyuktais tu viṣayān indriyaiś caran |*  
*ātmavaśyair vidheyātmā prasādam adhigacchati || 2.64*

*rāga dveṣa*: likes and dislikes; *viyuktaiḥ*: by those free from such things; *tu*: but; *viṣayān*: sense objects; *indriyaiḥ*: by the senses; *caran*: enjoying; *ātmavaśyair*: by the disciplined; *vidheyātmā*: self controlled; *prasādam*: placidity of mind; *adhigacchati*: attains

**2.64 The self-controlled man, moving among objects with his senses under control, free from both attraction and repulsion, attains peace.**

āgnīśāntaḥ śāntaḥ śāntaḥ śāntaḥ śāntaḥ  
āgnīśāntaḥ śāntaḥ śāntaḥ śāntaḥ śāntaḥ 2.65

*prasāde sarvaduḥkhānām hānir asyo 'pajāyate |*  
*prasannacetaso hy āśu buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate || 2.65*

*prasāde*: with achieving peace of mind; *sarva*: of all; *duḥkhānām*: of miseries; *hāniḥ*: destruction; *asya*: his; *upajāyate*: takes place; *prasannacetasaḥ*: of the happy-minded; *hi*: indeed; *āśu*: very soon; *buddhiḥ*: intelligence; *paryavatiṣṭhate*: firmly established

2.65 All pains are destroyed in that peace, for the intellect of the tranquil-minded soon becomes steady.

~(Öa` P\$ñ` Z Mm` P\$ñ` ^ndZm`  
Z Mm`nd` V: enp`Vaen`Vñ` HñV: gñ \_`2` 2.66

nā 'sti buddhir ayuktasya na cā 'yuktasya bhāvanā |  
na cā 'bhāwayataḥ śāntir asāntasya kutaḥ sukham || 2.66

na asti: there is not; buddhiḥ: wisdom; ayuktasya: of one who is not connected to Self; na: neither; ca: and; ayuktasya: of one devoid of Self awareness; bhāvanā: devotion; na: neither; ca: and; abhāwayataḥ: for the indisciplined; śāntiḥ: peace; asāntasya: of the indisciplined; kutaḥ: how; sukham: happiness

2.66 A person not in self awareness cannot be wise or happy or peaceful. How can there be happiness to one without peace?

Bp`YD` nUn\$`h MaVn\$` Y`Zn`Z`dYr` Vo`  
VXñ` ha`V àkn\$dm` Zn`d`\_dn\$`g` 2.67

indriyāṇāṁ hi caratām yaṁ mano 'nuvidhīyate |  
tad asya harati prajñām vāyur nāvam ivā 'mbhasi || 2.67

indriyāṇāṁ: of the senses; hi: indeed; caratām: moving among objects; yat: that; manaḥ: mind; anu: with; vidhīyate: joined; tat: that; asya: his; harati: takes away; prajñām: discrimination; vāyuḥ: wind; nāvam: a boat; iva: like; ambhasi: on the water

2.67 He loses his awareness of the present moment when his mind follows the wandering senses, just as the wind carries away a boat on the waters.

Vñ\_mŪñ`\_hm-nhmo{ZJhrVmZ gd@: &  
BpŷŸ`mŪrpŷŸ`mWŷ`ñVñ` àkm à{V{ŸVm && 2.68 &&

*tasmād yasya mahābāho nigṛhītāni sarvaśaḥ |*  
*indriyāṇi 'ndriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā || 2.68*

*tasmāt*: therefore; *yasya*: of one's; *mahābāho*: O mighty-armed one; *nigṛhītāni*: so curbed down; *sarvaśaḥ*: in all respects; *indriyāṇi*: the senses; *indriyārthebhyaḥ*: from the sense objects; *tasya*: his; *prajñā*: intelligence; *pratiṣṭhitā*: fixed

**2.68 O Mighty-armed one, his knowledge is therefore steady whose senses are completely detached from sense objects.**

`m{Zemgd°VñZñVñ`ñŌm{V°g\$ \_r &  
`ñ`ñŌm{V ^VñZ gm{Zemñí`Vno\_Ūo && 2.69 &&

*yā niśā sarvabhūtānām tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī |*  
*yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato munēḥ || 2.69*

*yā*: what; *niśā*: is night; *sarva*: all; *bhūtānām*: of living entities; *tasyām*: in that; *jāgarti*: wakeful; *saṁyamī*: the self-controlled; *yasyām*: in which; *jāgrati*: awake; *bhūtāni*: all beings; *sā*: that is; *niśā*: night; *paśyataḥ*: for the seer; *munēḥ*: for the sage

**2.69 The self-controlled man lies awake in that which is night to all beings. That in which all beings are awake is the night for the sage who sees.**

Amñ`mŪ\_Mbā{VŸ\$ g\_Ÿ\_mn: à{depŷV`ŪV&  
VŪEH\$m\_m`šà{depŷV gd}g epŷV\_mñŷV Z H\$m\_H\$m\_r && 2.70 &&

*āpūryamāṇam acalapraṭiṣṭhaṁ samudram āpaḥ praviśanti yadvat |*  
*tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve sa śāntim āpnoti na kāmakāmī || 2.70*

*āpūryamāṇaṁ*: always filled; *acalapratiṣṭhaṁ*: steadily established; *samudraṁ*: the ocean; *āpaḥ*: water; *praviśanti*: enter; *yadvat*: as; *tadvat*: so; *kāmāḥ*: desires; *yaṁ*: one; *praviśanti*: enter; *sarve*: all; *saḥ*: that person; *śāntim*: peace; *āpnoti*: achieves; *na*: not; *kāmakāmī*: one who cherishes longings

*2.70 Just as all waters enter the ocean, he attains peace into whom all desires enter, which when filled from all sides, remains unmoved; not the desirer of desires.*

{dhm̃ H\$m\_nZ²` : gdnZ²nw\_n\$ia[V {Z:ñnñ: &  
{Z\_©m{Zah' m: g emp'V\_{YJAN\$V && 2.71 &&

*vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān pumānś carati niḥspṛhaḥ |*  
*nir mamo nir ahaṁkāraḥ sa śāntim adhigacchati || 2.71*

*vihāya*: after giving up; *kāmān*: desires for sense gratification; *yaḥ*: the person; *sarvān*: all; *pumān*: a person; *carati*: moves; *niḥspṛhaḥ*: desireless; *nir mamo*: without a sense of proprietorship; *nir ahaṁkāraḥ*: without false ego; *saḥ*: he; *śāntim*: peace; *adhigacchati*: attains

*2.71 The man who moves about abandoning all desires, without longing, without the sense of I and mine, attains peace.*

Efm~m=r pñW{V: nmW©Ziñ\$anB` {d\_@{V &  
pñWEdmēñ` m\_YVH\$nb@n ~{Zdm@\_AN\$V && 2.72 &&

*eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ pārtha nai 'nām prāpya vimuhyati |*  
*sthitvā 'syām antakāle 'pi brahma nirvāṇam ṛcchati || 2.72*

*eṣā*: this; *brāhmī*: God-realised soul; *sthiṭiḥ*: situation; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *na*: not; *enām*: this; *prāpya*: after achieving; *vimuhyati*: get deluded; *sthitvā*: being so situated; *asyām*: in this state; *antakāle*: at the end of life; *api*: also; *brahma nirvāṇam*: passing into one with the ultimate Reality; *ṛcchati*: attains

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2.72 O Partha, this is the state of **Brahman**; none is deluded after attaining this. Even at the end of life, one attains oneness with Brahman when established in this state.

B{V I r\_ØJd0rVngn{ZfEgw~«{dÚm`n§`n0lemó0  
I rH\$UnD0Eg\$inKognL>»``n0noZm\_ {ÜVr`n0Ü`m : V&2V&

iti śrī mad bhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām  
yogaśāstre śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde sāṁkhya yogo nāma dvitīyo' dhyāyaḥ ||

In the **Upaniṣad** of the *Bhagavad gita*, the knowledge of **Brahman**, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the second discourse designated:

**Sāṁkhya Yogaḥ**



## Verses Of Gita Chapter - 3

AW VWr`mU`m :

H\$\_©mJ :

**Karma Yogaḥ**

AOQ CdnM

Á`m gr MĀH\$\_ŪñVo\_Vm~(ŌŌZnK2 &  
VpĒH\$\_H\$\_Ū Kmo\_n\$(Z`mD`{g Hĕd && 3.1

*arjuna uvāca*

*jyāyasī cet karmaṇas te matā buddhir janārdana ।  
tat kiṁ karmaṇi ghore mām niyojayasi keśava ॥ 3.1*

*arjuna:* Arjuna; *uvāca:* said; *jyāyasī:* speaking highly; *cet:* although; *karmaṇas:* action; *te:* your; *matā:* opinion; *buddhir:* knowledge; *janārdana:* Janardana; *tat:* therefore; *kiṁ:* why; *karmaṇi:* in action; *ghore:* terrible; *mām:* me; *niyojayasi:* engaging me; *keśava:* Keshava (slayer of the demon Keshi)

**3.1 Arjuna said: O Janardana, O Kesava, Why do You make me engage in this terrible war if You think that knowledge is superior to action?**

ì`m\_I Wd dnŠ`Z ~Ō`nn`grd\_oĕ  
VXb\$ dX {Z{ÜĒ``Z I òmeh\_nBZm\_m\_2'&& 3.2

*vyāmiśreṇe'va vākyena buddhiṁ mohayasī'va me ।  
tad ekaṁ vada niścitya yena śreyo'ham āpnuyām ॥ 3.2*

*vyāmiśreṇa:* by ambiguous; *iva:* as; *vākyena:* words; *buddhiṁ:* intelligence; *mohayasī:* confusing; *iva:* as; *me:* my; *tat:* therefore; *ekaṁ:* one; *vada:* tell; *niścitya:* for certain; *yena:* by which; *śreyaḥ:* benefit; *ahaṁ:* I; *āpnuyām:* may have

**3.2 My intelligence is confused by Your conflicting words. Tell me clearly what is best for me.**

I r^JdmZmM  
 bmb@pñ\_{YU{dYm{Zö#namàn@P\$ñ\_`mZK &  
 knZ`mōz gnL>>`mZñH\$`mōz`nqJZm^2&& 3.3

śrī bhagavān uvāca

loke'smin dvividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayā'nagha ।  
 jñānayogena sām̐khyānām̐ karmayogena yoginām̐ ॥ 3.3

śrī bhagavān uvāca: the Lord said; loka: in the world; asmin: this; dvividhā: two kinds of; niṣṭhā: faith; purā: before; proktā: were said; mayā: by Me; anagha: O sinless one; jñānayogena: by the yoga of knowledge; sām̐khyānām̐: of the Sankhya; karmayogena: by the yoga of action; yoginām̐: of the yoga practitioners

**3.3 The Lord said, 'O sinless Arjuna, as I said before, in this world there are two paths; Self knowledge for the intellectual and the path of action of the knowing.**

Z H\$\_Om\_Zmā^npjH\$`^a nēfnefZWo&  
 Z M g\$`gZnKd {gqō g\_{YJAN\$V && 3.4

na karmanām̐ anārambhān naiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣo'snute ।  
 na ca saṁnyasanād̐ eva siddhiṁ samadhiḡacchati ॥ 3.4

na: without; karmanām̐: of the actions; anārambhān: abstaining; naiṣkarmyaṁ: freedom from action; puruṣaḥ: man; āsnute: achieve; na: not; ca: also; saṁnyasanāt̐: by renunciation; eva: surely; siddhiṁ: success; samadhiḡacchati: attain

**3.4 A person does not attain freedom from action by abstaining from work, nor does he attain fulfillment by giving up action.**

Z {h H\$üĖj U\_{n Om/w{VöĖ`H\$\_P\$V^2&  
 H\$m Vøde: H\$\_gd:āH\$VOjĖ; && 3.5

na hi kaścit kṣaṇam̐ api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarmakṛt ।  
 kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛtijair guṇaiḥ ॥ 3.5

*na*: not; *hi*: surely; *kaścit*: anyone; *kṣaṇam*: for a moment; *api*: also; *jātu*: even; *tiṣṭhati*: stands; *akarmakṛt*: without doing something; *kāryate*: forced to work; *hi*: surely; *avaśaḥ*: helplessly; *karma*: action; *sarvaḥ*: all; *prakṛtijaiḥ*: of the modes of material nature; *guṇaiḥ*: by the attributes

**3.5 Surely, not even for a moment can anyone stand without doing something. He is always in action, despite himself, as this is his very nature.**

ḤṢ\_ṖṼḌ`ṁU g\$ ā` ` AnñVo\_Zgm ñ\_aZ² Ṽ  
BṖṼḌ` ṁVṁṖḍ\_TṁṚ\_m{I` ṁMma: g CÀ` VoṼ&& 3.6

*karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya ya āste manasā smaran* |  
*indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate* || 3.6

*karmendriyāṇi*: the five working sense organs; *saṁyamya*: restraining; *ya*: who; *āste*: remains; *manasā*: mentally; *smaran*: recollecting; *indriyārthān*: objects of the senses; *vimūḍhātmā*: foolish; *atma*: soul; *mithyācāraḥ*: hypocrite; *saḥ*: he; *ucyate*: is called

**3.6 He who restrains the sense organs, but who still thinks of the objects of the senses is deluded and is called a hypocrite.**

`ṁñḌḍṖṼḌ`ṁU \_Zgm(Z`ā`ma^VṁOṼ Ṽ  
ḤṢ\_ṖṼḌ` ; ḤṢ\_ṁṁ\_g°\$: g {d(eî` VoṼ&& 3.7

*yas tv indriyāṇi manasā niyamyā 'rabhate 'rjuna* |  
*karmendriyaiḥ karmayogam asaaktaḥ sa viśiṣyate* || 3.7

*yaḥ*: who; *tu*: but; *indriyāṇi*: senses; *manasā*: by the mind; *niyamyā*: controlling; *ārabhate*: begins; *arjuna*: O Arjuna; *karmendriyaiḥ*: by the active sense organs; *karmayogam*: work of devotion; *asaaktaḥ*: without attachment; *saḥ*: he; *viśiṣyate*: superior

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**3.7 He who begins controlling the senses by the mind and performs selfless work through the sense organs is superior, O Arjuna.**

{Z`V\$Hœ H\$`Ēd\$H\$`Á`m`møH\$`θ:  
eara`m`n`n M VoZ à{gŌçKH\$`θ: 3.8

*niyataṁ kuru karma tvaṁ karma jyāyo hyakarmaṇaḥ |*  
*śarīrayātrā 'pi ca te na prasiddhyed akarmaṇaḥ || 3.8*

*niyataṁ*: prescribed; *kuru*: do; *karma*: work; *tvaṁ*: you; *karma*: work; *jyāyaḥ*: better; *hi*: than; *akarmaṇaḥ*: without work; *śarīra*: body; *yātrā*: maintenance; *api*: even; *ca*: also; *te*: your; *na*: never; *prasiddhyet*: possible; *akarmaṇaḥ*: without work

**3.8 Do your prescribed work, as doing work is better than being idle. Even your own body cannot be maintained without work.**

`k`mVnēH\$`θmē`I bñH\$`θ`\$H\$`θ`YZ: 3.9  
VXW`H\$`θ`\$Vō`\_w\$g": g\_nMa 3.9

*yajñārthāt karmaṇo'nyatra loko'yam karmabandhanaḥ |*  
*tad arthaṁ karma kaunteya mukta saṅgaḥ samācara || 3.9*

*yajñārthāt*: sacrifice for; *karmaṇaḥ*: work done; *anyatra*: otherwise; *lokaḥ*: world; *ayaṁ*: this; *karma bandhanaḥ*: bondage by work; *tad*: Him; *arthaṁ*: for; *karma*: work; *kaunteya*: O son of Kunti; *mukta*: liberated; *saṅgaḥ*: attachment; *samācara*: do perfectly

**3.9 Work has to be performed selflessly; otherwise, work binds one to this world. O son of Kunti, perform your work for Me and you will do it perfectly, liberated and without attachment.**

gh`km àOm gŷŌ%anandnM àOm(V:3.10  
AZZ àg{dî`Ūd`fchēpnēdi`H\$m\_Yn\$ 3.10

sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā puro'vāca prajāpatiḥ ।  
anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vo'stv iṣṭakāma dhuk ॥ 3.10

sah: along with; yajñāḥ: sacrifices; prajāḥ: people; sṛṣṭvā: creating; puro: before; uvāca: said; prajāpatiḥ: the lord of creation; anena: by this; prasaviṣyadhvam: be more and more prosperous; eṣaḥ: certainly; vaḥ: your; astu: let it be; iṣṭa: desired; kāma dhuk: bestower of gifts

**3.10 Brahma, the lord of creation before creating human kind as selfless sacrifice said, 'By this selfless service, be more and more prosperous and let it bestow all the desired gifts.'**

Ḍānāḥ^nd` VmZz VoḌdm^nd` YVnd: ॥  
nañnaṣ^nd` YV: I ò : na\_dññ` W ॥ 3.11

devān bhāvayatā' nena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ ।  
parasparam bhāvayantaḥ śreyāḥ param avāpsyatha ॥ 3.11

devān: celestial beings; bhāvayata: having pleased; anena: by this sacrifice; te: those; devāḥ: demigods; bhāvayantu: will please; vaḥ: you; parasparam: mutual; bhāvayantaḥ: pleasing one another; śreyāḥ: prosperity; param: supreme; avāpsyatha: achieve

**3.11 The celestial beings, being pleased by this sacrifice, will also nourish you; with this mutual nourishing of one another, you will achieve supreme prosperity.**

Bi`ā^ndpñh dnoḌdmXmñ` YVo` k^ndVm ॥  
VXñmZàXm` p`no`no^L`PññVZ Ed g: ॥ 3.12

iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajñabhāvitāḥ ।  
tair dattān apradāyai 'bhyo yo bhuñkte stena eva saḥ ॥ 3.12

iṣṭān: desired; bhogān: necessities of life; hi: certainly; vaḥ: to you; devāḥ: demigods; dāsyante: award; yajña: sacrifice; bhāvitāḥ: satisfied; taiḥ: by them; dattān: things given; apradāya: without offering; ebhyaḥ: to the celestial beings; yaḥ: who; bhuñkte: enjoys; stenaḥ: thief; eva: certainly; saḥ: he

*3.12 Satisfied with the selfless service, the celestial beings certainly award you the desired necessities of life. He who enjoys the things given by them without offering to the celestial beings is certainly a thief.*

$\backslash k\{ei\{eZ: gVno\_A^{\sim}Vogd\{Sp\sim f; \&$   
 $^{\wedge}\AA OVVoEdK\$nmm\backslash onMYE^{\sim}n\grave{e} H\$aUnV^2\&\& 3.13$

yajñaśiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarva kilbiṣaiḥ ।  
bhuñjate te tvaghaṁ pāpā ye pacantyātmakāranāt ॥ 3.13

*yajñaśiṣṭāśinaḥ*: sacrifice, food, eaters; *santaḥ*: devotees; *mucyante*: get relief from; *sarva*: all; *kilbiṣaiḥ*: sins; *bhuñjate*: enjoy; *te*: they; *tu*: but; *aghaṁ*: grievous; *pāpāḥ*: sins; *ye*: those; *pacanti*: prepare food; *ātmakāraṇāt*: for sense enjoyment

*3.13 Those who eat food after selfless service are free of all sins. Those who prepare food for sense enjoyment do grievous sin.*

$$\frac{A_{\text{Pm}}}{k} \left( \frac{\partial p}{\partial V} \right)^{-1} = \frac{V_m}{n_0} \left( \frac{\partial p}{\partial V} \right)^{-1} + \frac{H_s}{g} \left( \frac{\partial p}{\partial V} \right)^{-1} \quad (3.14)$$

annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyād annasambhavaḥ ।  
yajñād bhavati parjanyo yajñah karmasamudbhavaḥ ॥ 3.14

*annāt*: from grains; *bhavantī*: grow; *bhūtāni*: beings; *parjanyaāt*: from rains; *anna*: food grains; *sambhavaḥ*: possible; *yajñāt*: from sacrifice; *bhavati*: becomes possible; *parjanyaḥ*: rains; *yajñah*: sacrifice; *karma*: work; *samudbhavaḥ*: born of

*3.14 All beings grow from food grains, from rains the food grains become possible, the rains become possible from selfless sacrifice.*

[illegible]

*karma brahmodbhavaṁ viddhi brahmā 'kṣarasamudbhavam ।  
tasmāt sarvagataṁ brahma nityaṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam ॥ 3.15*

*karma*: work; *brahmodbhavaṁ*: Creator born of; *viddhi*: know; *brahma*: Creator; *akṣarasamudbhavaṁ*: Supreme born of; *tasmāt*: therefore; *sarvagataṁ*: all-pervading; *brahma*: Supreme; *nityaṁ*: eternally; *yajñe*: in sacrifice; *pratiṣṭhitam*: situated

**3.15 Know that work is born of the Creator and He is born of the Supreme. The all-pervading Supreme is eternally situated in sacrifice.**

Edšad{V@SMH\$ZnZdV©Vrh `: &  
AKm̄ {apŸĐ`nam\_no\_nK\$nnW©g Ord{V && 3.16

*evaṁ pravartitaṁ cakram nā'nuvartayati'ha yaḥ ।  
aghāyur indriyārāmo moghaṁ pārtha sa jīvati ॥ 3.16*

*evaṁ*: prescribed; *pravartitaṁ*: established; *cakram*: cycle; *na*: not; *anuvartayati*: adopt; *iha*: in this; *yaḥ*: who; *aghāyuh*: life full of sins; *indriyārāmaḥ*: satisfied in sense gratification; *moghaṁ*: useless; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *saḥ*: he; *jīvati*: lives

**3.16 O Partha, he who does not adopt the prescribed, established cycle lives a life full of sins. Rejoicing in sense gratification, he lives a useless life.**

`ñĒdnĒ\_a{Vad ñ`nXnĒ\_VâÜ \_mZd: &  
AnĒ\_Ÿ`d M gŸVññVñ` H\$ñ`^Z {dÜVo&& 3.17

*yas tu ātmaratir eva syād ātmatrptaś ca mānavaḥ ।  
ātmanyeva ca saṁtuṣṭastasya kāryaṁ na vidyate ॥ 3.17*

*yaḥ*: who; *tu*: but; *ātmaratiḥ*: takes pleasure; *eva*: certainly; *syāt*: remains; *ātmatrptaḥ*: satisfied in self; *ca*: and; *mānavaḥ*: man; *ātmani*: in oneself; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: and; *saṁtuṣṭaḥ*: satiated; *tasya*: his; *kāryaṁ*: work; *na*: not; *vidyate*: exist

**3.17 One who takes pleasure in the self, who is satisfied in the self and who is satiated in oneself, for him certainly, no work exists.**

Zp Vñ` H\$VZnVñ)ZnH\$VZn H\$üZ &  
Z Mnñ` gd°VñH\$üXWñ nml` : & 3.18

*nai 'va tasya kṛtenā 'rtho nā 'kṛtene 'ha kaścana |*  
*na cā 'sya sarvabhūteṣu kaścīd arthavyapāśrayaḥ || 3.18*

*na*: never; *eva*: certainly; *tasya*: his; *kṛtena*: by doing duty; *arthaḥ*: purpose; *na*: not; *akṛtena*: without doing duty; *iha*: in this world; *kaścana*: whatever; *na*: never; *ca*: and; *asya*: of him; *sarvabhūteṣu*: all living beings; *kaścīd*: any; *artha*: purpose; *vyapāśrayaḥ*: taking shelter of

**3.18** *Certainly, he never has any purpose for doing his duty or for not doing his duty in this world. He does not depend on any living being.*

Vñ\_nKg°\$: gVV\$H\$ñ`^H\$\_g\_nMa &  
Ag°\$ññMañH\$\_ñ\_nññV ñéñ: & 3.19

*tasmād asaktaḥ satataṁ kāryaṁ karma samācara |*  
*asakto hyācaran karma param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ || 3.19*

*tasmāt*: therefore, *asaktaḥ*: without attachment, *satataṁ*: always, *kāryaṁ*: work, *karma*: work, *samācara*: perform, *asaktaḥ*: not attached, *hi*: certainly, *ācaran*: performing, *karma*: work, *param*: supreme, *āpnoti*: achieves, *pūruṣaḥ*: man

**3.19** *Therefore, one should work always without attachment. Performing work without attachment, certainly, man achieves the Supreme.*

H\$\_Ep {h g\$g{Ö\_nñVñmOZH\$ñK` : &  
bnñ\$gñ\_h\_dññ gññ`ñH\$Vñññg & 3.20

*karmanai'va hi saṁsiddhim āsthitā janakādayaḥ |*  
*lokasaṁgraham evā'pi sampaśyan kartum arhasi || 3.20*

*karmanā*: by work; *eva*: also; *hi*: certainly; *saṁsiddhim*: perfection; *āsthitāḥ*: situated; *janakādayaḥ*: Janaka other kings; *lokasaṁgraham*: educating people; *eva*: also; *api*: therefore; *sampaśyan*: considering; *kartum*: act; *arhasi*: deserve



**3.20 King Janaka and others attained perfection by selfless service. To guide others you too must act selflessly.**

Yad yat ācarati śreṣṭhaḥ tat-tad eve'taro janaḥ ।  
sa yat pramāṇaṁ kurute lokas tad anuvartate ॥ 3.21

yad-yat ācarati śreṣṭhaḥ tat-tad eve'taro janaḥ ।  
sa yat pramāṇaṁ kurute lokas tad anuvartate ॥ 3.21

yad-yat: what; ācarati: act; śreṣṭhaḥ: great; tat-tat: that; eva: certainly; itaraḥ: common; janaḥ: persons; saḥ: he; yat: what; pramāṇaḥ: evidence; kurute: perform; lokaḥ: world; tat: that; anuvartate: follow in footsteps

**3.21 Whatever action is performed by a great person, others follow. They follow the example set by him.**

na me pārthā 'sti kartavyaṁ triṣu lokeṣu kiṁcana ।  
nā'navāptam avāptavyaṁ varta eva ca karmaṇi ॥ 3.22

na me pārthā 'sti kartavyaṁ triṣu lokeṣu kiṁcana ।  
nā'navāptam avāptavyaṁ varta eva ca karmaṇi ॥ 3.22

na: not; me: mine; pārtha: O son of Pritha; asti: is; kartavyaṁ: duty; triṣu: in the three; lokeṣu: worlds; kiṁcana: anything; na: no; anavāptam: in want; avāptavyaṁ: to be gained; varte: engaged; eva: certainly; ca: and; karmaṇi: work

**3.22 O Partha, there is nothing that I must do in the three worlds. Neither am I in want of anything nor do I have anything to gain. Yet, I am always in action.**

yadi hyaḥam na varteyaṁ jātu karmaṇyatandritaḥ ।  
mama vartmā'nuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ ॥ 3.23

yadi hyaḥam na varteyaṁ jātu karmaṇyatandritaḥ ।  
mama vartmā'nuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ ॥ 3.23

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yadi: if; hi: certainly; ahaṁ: I; na: not; varteyaṁ: engage; jātu: ever; karmaṇi: work; atandritaḥ: with care; mama: My; vartma: path; anuvartante: follow; manuṣyāḥ: persons; pārtha: Partha; sarvaśaḥ: in all respects

**3.23 If I did not engage in work with care, O Partha, certainly, people would follow My path in all respects.**

CEgrXô ta\_obnblsmZ Hô mHS\_9VKh\_2V  
g' añ` M H\$Vnfn`m\_mhV`m\_\_m àOm V& 3.24

utsīdeyurime lokā na kuryām karma ced aham |  
saṁkarasya ca kartā syām upahanyām imāḥ prajāḥ || 3.24

utsīdeyuḥ: ruin; ime: these; lokāḥ: worlds; na: not; kuryām: do; karma: work; cet: if; ahaṁ: I; saṁkarasya: confusion of species; ca: and; kartā: doer; syām: shall be; upahanyām: destroy; imāḥ: these; prajāḥ: beings

**3.24 If I do not work, then these worlds would be ruined. I would be the cause of creating confusion and destruction.**

g°\$m H\$\_E {dÜngm`WmHôdP^mV V  
Hô mÜÜngVWng°\$ÜH\$fdnH\$g\$kh\_2V& 3.25

saktāḥ karmaṇyavidvāṁso yathā kurvanti bhārata |  
kuryād vidvāṁs tathā'saktaś cikīrṣur lokasaṁgraham || 3.25

saktāḥ: attached; karmaṇi: work; avidvāṁsaḥ: ignorant; yathā: as; kurvanti: do; bhārata: Bharata; kuryāt: do; vidvān: wise; tathā: and; asaktaḥ: without attachment; cikīrṣuḥ: desiring; lokasaṁgraham: leading people

**3.25 As the ignorant do their work with attachment to the results, O Bharata, the wise do so without attachment, for the welfare of people.**

na buddhiḥ bhedaṁ janayed ajñānāṁ karma saṅgināṁ ।  
joṣayet sarva karmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran ॥ 3.26

*na buddhiḥ bhedaṁ janayed ajñānāṁ karma saṅgināṁ ।  
joṣayet sarva karmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran ॥ 3.26*

*na*: not; *buddhi*: intelligence; *bhedaṁ*: disrupt; *janayet*: do; *ajñānāṁ*: ignorant; *karma*: work; *saṅgināṁ*: attached; *joṣayet*: encouraged; *sarva*: all; *karmāṇi*: work; *vidvān*: wise; *yuktaḥ*: engaged; *samācaran*: practising

**3.26 Let not the wise disturb the minds of the ignorant who are attached to the results of work. They should encourage them to act without attachment.**

prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ ।  
ahaṁkāra vimūḍhātmā kartā'ham iti manyate ॥ 3.27

*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ ।  
ahaṁkāra vimūḍhātmā kartā'ham iti manyate ॥ 3.27*

*prakṛteḥ*: of material nature; *kriyamāṇāni*: all being done; *guṇaiḥ*: by the attributes; *karmāṇi*: work; *sarvaśaḥ*: all kinds of; *ahaṁkāra*: ego; *vimūḍhātmā*: confused being; *kartā*: doer; *ahaṁ*: I; *iti*: thus; *manyate*: thinks

**3.27 People, confused by ego, think they are the doers of all kinds of work while it is being done by the energy of nature.**

tattvavīt tu mahābāho guṇakarma vibhāgayoḥ ।  
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate ॥ 3.28

*tattvavīt tu mahābāho guṇakarma vibhāgayoḥ ।  
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate ॥ 3.28*

*tattvavīt*: one who knows the truth; *tu*: but; *mahābāho*: mighty-armed one; *guṇa*: attributes; *karma*: work; *vibhāgayoḥ*: differences; *guṇāḥ*: attributes; *guṇeṣu*: in sense gratification; *vartante*: engaged; *iti*: thus; *matvā*: thinking; *na*: never; *sajjate*: becomes attached

3.28 *One who knows the Truth, O mighty-armed one, knows the differences between the attributes of nature and work. Knowing well about the attributes and sense gratification, he never becomes attached.*

àH\$Vò@gsJm g, mVòJWHS\_gw&  
VmZH\$ÈñZ{dXm\_YXmYH\$ÈñZ{dP {dMmb`V²&& 3.29

*prakṛter guṇa saṁmūḍhāḥ sajjante guṇa karmasu I*  
*tān akṛtsnavido mandān kṛtsnavin na vicālayet || 3.29*

*prakṛteḥ*: by the material nature; *guṇa*: attributes; *saṁmūḍhāḥ*: fooled; *sajjante*: become engaged; *guṇa*: attributes; *karmasu*: actions; *tān*: those; *akṛtsnavidaḥ*: persons with less wisdom; *mandān*: lazy; *kṛtsnavit*: who has wisdom; *na*: not; *vicālayet*: unsettle

3.29 *Fooled by the attributes of nature, those people with less wisdom or who are lazy become engaged in actions driven by these attributes. But, the wise should not unsettle them.*

\_{{` gdnfU H\$\_nfU g\$` n`nù` nĒ\_MVgm&  
{Zamer{Z©m^fcdm`ù`ñd {dJVÁda: && 3.30

*mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi saṁnyasyā'dhyātmacetasā I*  
*nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ || 3.30*

*mayi*: to Me; *sarvāṇi*: all kinds of; *karmāṇi*: work; *saṁnyasya*: renouncing; *adhyātma*: spiritual knowledge; *cetasā*: consciousness; *nirāśīḥ*: without desire for gain; *nir mamaḥ*: without sense of ownership; *bhūtvā*: being; *yudhyasva*: fight; *vigatajvaraḥ*: without being lazy

3.30 *Dedicating the results of work to Me, with consciousness filled with spiritual knowledge, without desire for gain and without sense of ownership, without being lazy, do what you have to do.*

o\_o\_V{X\$ZÈ`\_ZQVô\$V\_mZdm &  
I ŌndŸVnēZgŸ ŸVno\_ā`ŸVoVē(n H\$ \_{^: && 3.31

ye me matam idam nityam anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ |  
śraddhāvanto' nasūyanto mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ || 3.31

ye: who; me: My; matam: teaching; idam: these; nityam: always; anutiṣṭhanti: execute regularly; mānavāḥ: persons; śraddhāvantaḥ: with faith; anasūyantaḥ: without envy; mucyante: become free; te: all of them; api: even; karmabhiḥ: from the bondage of fruitive actions

**3.31 Those persons who execute their duties according to My teaching and who follow these teachings faithfully, without envy, become free from the bondage of actions.**

oEdwXā`gŸ ŸVnoZmZQVô\$V\_o\_V\_2^&  
gdRmZ(d\_JnēVnŸd{Ō ZiēZMwG: && 3.32

ye tu etad abhyasūyanto nā'nutiṣṭhanti me matam |  
sarvajñāna vimūdhāns tān viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ || 3.32

ye: those; tu: but; etad: this; abhyasūryantaḥ: out of envy; na: not; anutiṣṭhanti: regularly perform; me: My; matam: teaching; sarvajñāna: all kinds of knowledge; vimūdhān: fooled; tān: they; viddhi: know; naṣṭān: ruined; acetasaḥ: without Consciousness

**3.32 But those who do not regularly perform their duty according to My teaching are ignorant, senseless and ruined.**

gNē\$Mo`Vondn`m āH\$VknēZdmZ(n &  
āH\$V`npŸV ^Ÿm{Z {ZJk: qH\$ H\$[aî`{V && 3.33

sadṛśam ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛter jñānavān api |  
prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati || 3.33

---

*sadṛśam*: according to; *ceṣṭate*: tries; *svasyāḥ*: by one's nature; *prakṛteḥ*: modes; *jñānavān*: wise; *api*: even; *prakṛtiḥ*: nature; *yānti*: goes through; *bhūtāni*: living beings; *nigrahaḥ*: suppression; *kiṁ*: what; *kariṣyati*: can do

**3.33** *Even the wise person tries to act according to the modes of his own nature, for all living beings go through their nature. What can restraint of the senses do?*

ḐpŸĐ`ñ`pŸĐ`ñ`nW}amJŸfŸp`i`dpñWVŸpŸ  
V`nŸŸde\_nJÀNŸŸpŸøñ`n[anpŸWZŸpŸ 3.34

*indriyasye'ndriyasyā'rthe rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau |*  
*tayor na vaśam āgacchet tau hy asya paripanthinau || 3.34*

*indriyasya*: of the senses; *indriyasya arthe*: for sense objects; *rāga*: attachment; *dveṣau*: repulsion; *vyavasthitau*: put under control; *tayoḥ*: of them; *na*: never; *vaśam*: control; *āgacchet*: come; *tau*: those; *hi*: certainly; *asya*: his; *paripanthinau*: stumbling blocks

**3.34** *Attachment and repulsion of the senses for sense objects should be put under control. One should never come under their control as they certainly are the stumbling blocks on the path of self-realization.*

I ò nZ²ñdY\_n}(dJW: naY\_nñdZŸŸRVñV²Ÿ  
ñdY\_{ZYZŸI ò : naY\_n)^`ndh: ŸŸ 3.35

*śreyān svadharma viguṇaḥ paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt |*  
*svadharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ paradharma bhayāvahaḥ || 3.35*

*śreyān*: better; *svadharmaḥ*: own duty; *viguṇaḥ*: in a faulty manner; *paradharmāt*: other's duty; *svanuṣṭhitāt*: perfectly done; *svadharme*: in one's duty; *nidhanaṁ*: death; *śreyaḥ*: better; *paradhamāḥ*: other's duty; *bhayāvahaḥ*: dangerous

**3.35** *It is better to do one's own duty, even if it is in a faulty manner, than to do someone else's duty perfectly. Death in the course of performing one's own duty is better than doing another's duty, as this can be dangerous.*

AOE CdmM  
 AW H&Z à`P\$P`\$nm\$Ma{V nēf: V  
 A{ZÀN{P{n dmU} ~bmXd {Z`nOV: V 3.36

arjuna uvāca

atha kena prayukto'yaṁ pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ ।  
 anicchann api vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitaḥ ॥ 3.36

arjuna uvāca: Arjuna said; atha: then; kena: by what; prayuktaḥ: forced; ayaṁ: one; pāpaṁ: sins; carati: acts; pūruṣaḥ: man; anicchann: without desiring; api: though; vārṣṇeya: O descendant of Vrishni; balāt: by force; iva: as if; niyojitaḥ: engaged

**3.36 Arjuna said, 'O descendant of Vrishni, then, by what is man forced to sinful acts, even without desiring, as if engaged by force?'**

I r ^JdmZdmM  
 H\$m\_ Ef H\$m\_ Ef aOmUg\_d: V  
 \_hmeZm\_hmnB\_m{dOçZ{h dJaU\_2V 3.37

śrī bhagavān uvāca

kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇa samudbhavaḥ ।  
 mahāśano mahāpāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam ॥ 3.37

śrī bhagavān uvāca: the Lord said; kāma: lust; eṣa: these; krodha: anger; eṣa: these; rajoguṇa: attribute of passion; samudbhavaḥ: born of; mahāśanaḥ: all-devouring; mahāpāpmā: greatly sinful; viddhi: know; enam: this; iha: in the world; vairiṇam: greatest enemy

**3.37 The Lord said, 'It is lust and anger born of the attribute of passion, all-devouring and sinful, which is one's greatest enemy in this world.'**

Yy\_ān{dā Vod{•`WnKen}\_bZ M V  
 `Wmē~āndV/moJ^AVWmVāK\_mdV\_2V 3.38

dhūmenā 'vriyate vahnir yathā 'darśo malena ca ।  
 yatho 'lbenā 'vṛto garbhas tathā tene 'dam āvṛtam ॥ 3.38

---

*dhūmena*: by smoke; *āvriyate*: covered; *vahniḥ*: fire; *yathā*: as; *ādarśaḥ*: mirror; *malena*: by dust; *ca*: also; *yathā*: as; *ulbena*: by the womb; *āvṛtaḥ*: covered; *garbhaḥ*: embryo; *tathā*: so; *tena*: by that; *idaṁ*: this; *āvṛtaṁ*: covered

**3.38** *As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dust, or as the embryo is covered by the womb, so also, the living being is covered by lust.*

AmcV\$knZ\_vZ knZZno(ZE` dfaUm`  
H\$m\_ē\$noJ H\$Vō XūngbJnZbZ M` 3.39

*āvṛtaṁ jñānam etena jñānino nityavairiṇā* |  
*kāmarūpeṇa kaunteya duṣpūreṇa'nalena ca* || 3.39

*āvṛtaṁ*: covered; *jñānam*: knowledge; *etena*: by this; *jñāninaḥ*: of the knower; *nitya*: eternal; *vairiṇā*: enemy; *kāma*: lust; *rūpeṇa*: in the form of; *kaunteya*: O son of Kunti; *duṣpūreṇa*: never satisfied; *analena*: by fire; *ca*: and

**3.39** *The knowledge of the knower is covered by this eternal enemy in the form of lust, which is never satisfied and burns like fire, O son of Kunti*

B{YD` mU\_Zno~QOaṇ` mYōnZ\_ā` Vo`  
EV{d`nh`E` f knZ\_mclE` Xqhz\_2` 3.40

*indriyāṇi mano buddhir asyā'dhiṣṭhānam ucyate* |  
*etaiḥ vimohayatyeṣa jñānam āvṛtya dehinam* || 3.40

*indriyāṇi*: senses; *manaḥ*: mind; *buddhiḥ*: intelligence; *asya*: of; *adhiṣṭhānam*: sitting place; *ucyate*: called; *etaiḥ*: by these; *vimohayati*: confuses; *eṣaḥ*: of this; *jñānam*: knowledge; *āvṛtya*: covering; *dehinam*: embodied being

**3.40** *The senses, the mind and the intelligence are the locations of this lust, which confuses the embodied being and covers the knowledge.*



Vñ\_mf{pVĐ`nĒ`mKp{Z`á`^aVf®&#34;  
nmß\_mZšàO{h øZškmZ{dkmZZmeZ\_²&#34; 3.41

*tasmāt tvam indriyāṇy ādau niyamya bharata ṛṣabha ।  
pāpmānaṁ prajahi hy enaṁ jñānavijñāna nāśanam ॥ 3.41*

*tasmāt*: therefore; *tvam*: you; *indriyāṇi*: senses; *ādau*: in the beginning; *niyamya*: by controlling; *bharata ṛṣabha*: O chief amongst the descendants of Bharata; *pāpmānaṁ*: symbol of sin; *prajahi*: curb; *hi*: certainly; *enaṁ*: this; *jñāna*: knowledge; *vijñāna*: consciousness; *nāśanam*: destroyer

**3.41** *Therefore, O chief amongst the descendants of Bharata, in the very beginning, control the senses and curb the symbol of sin, which is certainly the destroyer of knowledge and consciousness.*

BpVĐ`n{U nanĒ`nhpVĐ`ā` : na\$ \_Z: &#34;  
\_ZgnVwnam~(Ö`n)~ŮDo naVñVwg: &#34; 3.42

*indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ ।  
manasastu parā buddhiḥ yo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ ॥ 3.42*

*indriyāṇi*: senses; *parāṇi*: superior; *āhuḥ*: is said; *indriyebhyaḥ*: more than the senses; *paraṁ*: superior; *manaḥ*: mind; *manasaḥ*: more than the mind; *tu*: also; *parā*: superior; *buddhiḥ*: intelligence; *yaḥ*: who; *buddheḥ*: more than intelligence; *parataḥ*: superior; *tu*: but; *saḥ*: he

**3.42** *It is said that the senses are superior to the body. The mind is superior to the senses. The intelligence is still higher than the mind and the consciousness is even higher than intelligence.*

Ed\$~ŮDo.na\$~kÜdmgšVä`nĒ`mZ`nĒ`Zm&#34;  
O{h eĬj\_hm-nhmoH\$m\_ē\$ñ\$XmgX\_²&#34; 3.43

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*evaṁ buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā saṁstabhyā 'tmānam ātmanā |*  
*jahi śatruṁ māhābāho kāmarūpaṁ durāsadam || 3.43*

*evaṁ*: and; *buddheḥ*: of intelligence; *paraṁ*: superior; *buddhvā*: knowing; *saṁstabhya*: by steadying; *ātmānam*: of the mind; *ātmanā*: by intelligence; *jahi*: conquer; *śatruṁ*: enemy; *māhābāho*: O mighty-armed one; *kāma*: lust; *rūpaṁ*: in the form of; *durāsadam*: insatiable

**3.43** *Knowing the Self to be superior to mind and intelligence, by steadying the mind by intelligence, conquer the insatiable enemy in the form of lust, O mighty-armed one.*

B{V I r\_ØJdØrVngn{ZfEgw~«-{dÚm`n\$`mlemóo  
I rH\$UmOg\$InKoH\$©mnoZm\_V/r`mēU`m : 82Ÿ

*iti śrī mad bhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām*  
*yogaśāstre śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde karma yogo nāma tṛtīyo'dhyāyaḥ ||*

*In the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad gita, the knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the third discourse designated:*

### **Karma Yogaḥ**

## Verses Of Gita Chapter - 4

AW MVWmJ`n :

kmZH\$\_g\$`mg`mJ :

**Jñānakarmasanyāsa Yogah**

I r ^JdmZmM`  
B\_\$(ddndVo`mJ\$anP\$dmZh\_ì``\_2`  
{ddndm`\_Zdoanh\_ZlaúdnH\$de~drV2` 4.1

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*

*imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ proktavān ahaṁ avyayaṁ |  
vivasvān manave prāha manur ikṣvākave 'bravīt || 4.1*

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*: the Lord said; *imaṁ*: this; *vivasvate*: to the Sun god; *yogaṁ*: the science of yoga; *proktavān*: instructed; *ahaṁ*: I; *avyayaṁ*: imperishable; *vivasvān*: Sun god; *manave*: to Manu, the father of mankind; *prāha*: told; *manuḥ*: Manu; *ikṣvākave*: to King Ikshvaaku; *abravīt*: said

**4.1 The Lord said: 'I taught the sun god, Vivasvan, the imperishable science of yoga and Vivasvan taught Manu, the father of mankind and Manu in turn taught Ikshvaku.'**

Ed\$naānamāná{\_\_\$anOf`mJ{dXw`  
g H\$nbZn`\_hVm`mJmZi`naVn` 4.2

*evaṁ paramparā prāptam imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ |  
sa kālene 'ha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ paramtapa || 4.2*

*evaṁ*: thus; *paramparā*: Master-disciple succession; *prāptam*: received; *imaṁ*: this science; *rājarṣayaḥ*: the saintly kings; *viduḥ*: understood; *saḥ*: that knowledge; *kālena*: in the course of time; *iha*: in this world; *mahatā*: by great; *yogaḥ*: the science of yoga; *naṣṭaḥ*: lost; *paramtapa*: subduer of the enemies

4.2 The supreme science was thus received through the chain of master-disciple succession and the saintly kings understood it in that way. In the course of time, the succession was broken and therefore the science as it was appears to have been lost.

g Edm`\$\_`mV@U`m: ànP\$: namVZ: &  
^o\$ne(g\_ogI mMqV ahñ`\$øVXîm\_2&& 4.3

sa evā 'yañ mayā te 'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purāṇaḥ |  
bhakto 'si me sakhā ce 'ti rahasyaṁ hy etad uttamam || 4.3

saḥ: that; eva: only; ayañ: this; mayā: by Me; te: to you; adya: today; yogaḥ: the science of yoga; proktaḥ: spoken; purāṇaḥ: very old; bhaktaḥ: devotee; asi: you are; me: My; sakhā: friend; ca: also; iti: therefore; rahasyaṁ: mystery; hi: because etad: this; uttamañ: supreme

4.3 That ancient science of enlightenment, or entering into eternal bliss, is today taught by me to you because you are my devotee as well as my friend. You will certainly understand the supreme mystery of this science.

AO& CdmM &  
Ana\$^dVmoŸ\_na\$OŸ\_{ddñdV: &  
H\$W\_Ÿ{ŸOnZr`n\$Ēd\_nKq`ànP\$dmZ{V && 4.4

arjuna uvāca

aparañ bhavato janma parañ janma vivasvataḥ |  
katham etad vijāñ yāñ tvam ādau proktavāñ iti || 4.4

arjuna uvāca: Arjuna said; aparañ: of recent origin; bhavataḥ: Your; janma: birth; parañ: very old; janma: birth; vivasvataḥ: of the Sun god; katham: how; etad: this; vijāñ yāñ: can I understand; tvam: You; ādau: in the beginning; proktavāñ: instructed; iti: thus

4.4 Arjuna said: 'Oh Krishna, you are younger to the sun god Vivasvan by birth. How am I to understand that in the beginning you instructed this science to him?'

I r ^JdmZdmM  
 ~hŷZ \_oi` VrVm(Z Oŷ\_n(Z Vd MnOŷ &  
 Vmŷ` hŷdK gdmŷU Z ĒdŷdŷW naŷVn && 4.5

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*

*bahuni me vyatītāni janmāni tava cā 'rjuna |*  
*tāny ahaṁ veda sarvāṇi na tvaṁ vettha paramtapa || 4.5*

*śrī bhagavān uvāca:* The Lord said; *bahūni*: many; *me*: of Mine; *vyatī tā ni*: have passed; *janmāni*: births; *tava*: yours; *cā*: also; *arjuna*: O Arjuna; *tā ni*: all of those; *ahaṁ*: I; *veda*: do know; *sarvāṇi*: all; *na*: not; *tvam*: yourself; *vettha*: know; *paramtapa*: O scorcher of the foes

**4.5 The Lord said: Many many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you cannot, O Parantapa!**

AOmŷ(n gPi` `nĒ\_m^VnZm\_oeamŷ(n gZ²ŷ  
 àHŷV ŋdm\_{Yðm` gŷ`dmā` nĒ\_\_m` m && 4.6

*ajo 'pi sann avyayātmā bhūtānām īśvaro 'pi san |*  
*prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmyātmamayayā || 4.6*

*ajāḥ*: unborn; *api*: also; *san*: being so; *avyaya*: instructible; *atmā*: spirit; *bhūtānām*: living entities; *īśvaraḥ*: supreme Lord; *api*: also; *san*: being so; *prakṛtiṁ*: nature; *svām*: of Myself; *adhiṣṭhāya*: keeping under control; *sambhavāmi*: I come into being; *ātmamayayā*: by My divine potency.

**4.6 Although I am unborn, imperishable and the lord of all living entities, by ruling my nature I reappear by my own māyā.**

`Xm`Xm{h Y\_ŷ` ŷdm(Z^ŷ{V ^maV &  
 Aä` ŷWmZ\_Y\_ŷ` VXnĒ\_nZŷgŷdmā` h\_²ŷ& 4.7

*yadā-yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata |*  
*abhyutthānam adharmasya tadā 'tmānaṁ srjāmyaham || 4.7*

---

yadā -yadā : whenever; hi: well; dharmasya: of righteousness; glāniḥ: decline; bhavati: takes place; bhārata: O descendant of Bharata; abhyutthānaḥ: predominance; adharmasya: of unrighteousness; tadā : at that time; ātmānaḥ: self; sṛjāmi: bring forth; ahaḥ: I

**4.7 When positive consciousness declines, when collective negativity rises, Again and again, at these times, I am reborn.**

n[a]lṇJm̐ gmYzṣ{dZmem̐ M XūH\$Vm̐ 2k̐  
Y\_ḡḡWm̐ZnVm̐ḡ ḡṣṣdm̐\_`wō`wōk̐ 4.8

paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām ।  
dharma saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge-yuge ॥ 4.8

paritrāṇāya: for the protection of; sādḥūnām: of the pious; vināśāya: to destruction; ca: also; duṣkṛtām: of the wicked; dharma: righteousness; saṁsthāpanārthāya: to establish; sambhavāmi: I manifest; yuge-yuge: age after age

**4.8 To nurture the pious and to annihilate the wicked, to re-establish righteousness I am reborn, age after age.**

OŸ\_ H\$\_M̐\_o(Xi`\_oŸ`moclŸmVīdV: k̐  
Ē`ŠīdmXbṣnZŸ\_ ZfV\_m\_ŸV gm̐OŸ k̐ 4.9

janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ ।  
tyaktvā dehaṁ punarjanma nai 'ti mām eti so 'rjuna ॥ 4.9

janma: birth; karma: work; ca: and; me: of Mine; divyam: divine; evaṁ: so also; yaḥ: anyone whoever; vetti: knows; tattvataḥ: in reality; tyaktvā: after leaving aside; dehaṁ: body; punaḥ: again; janma: birth; na: never; eti: attains; mām: unto Me; eti: does attain; saḥ: he; arjuna: Arjuna

**4.9 One who knows or experiences my divine appearance and activities does not take birth again in this material world after leaving the body but attains me, o Arjuna.**

drVamJ^`H\$nm\_Y`m\_m\_mn(I Vm &  
~hdmknZVngmny/m\_Ønd\_mJVm && 4.10

vīta rāga bhaya krodhā manmayā mām upāśritāḥ |  
bahavo jñāna tapasā pūtā mad bhāvam āgatāḥ || 4.10

vīta: free from; rāga: passion; bhaya: fear; krodhāḥ: anger; manmayā: fully absorbed in Me; mām: unto Me; upāśritāḥ: taking refuge; bahavaḥ: many beings; jñāna: wisdom; tapasā: by penance; pūtāḥ: sanctified; mad bhāvaḥ: My nature; āgatāḥ: attained

**4.10 Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being filled with me and by taking refuge in me, many beings in the past have become sanctified by the knowledge of me and have realized me.**

`o`Wm\_n\$ànUyVoVn\$VWpd^Omā`h\_2&  
\_\_dE\_mZmVVo\_Zi`m nnVgde: && 4.11

ye yathā mām prapadyante tāmstathai 'va bhajāmyaham |  
mama vartmā 'nuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ || 4.11

ye: whoever; yathā: whatever way; mām: unto Me; prapadyante: seek; tām: unto them; tathā eva: in the same way; bhajāmi: I approach; aham: I; mama: My; vartma: of the path; anuvartante: follow; manuṣyāḥ: people; pārtha: son of Pritha; sarvaśaḥ: in all respects

**4.11 I reward everyone, I show myself to all people, according to the manner in which they surrender unto me, in the manner that they are devoted to me, O Paartha!**

H\$m-YV: H\$\_Øn\$ {gqÕ`OyV Bh XadVm &  
{j à\$h\_mZifobnH\$ {g{Õ^Q(V H\$\_Øm && 4.12

kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇām siddhiṁ yajanta iha devatāḥ |  
kṣipraṁ hi mānuṣe loke siddhir bhavati karmajā || 4.12

kāṅkṣantaḥ: desiring; karmaṇām: of activities; siddhiṁ: success; yajante: worship; iha: in this world; devatāḥ: gods; kṣipraṁ: quickly; hi: for; mānuṣe loke: in human society; siddhiḥ bhavati: success comes; karmajā: born of action

**4.12 Men in this world desire success from activities and therefore they worship the gods. Men get instant results from active work in this world.**

MmVdE<sup>a</sup> \_`mgV\$JWHS\_@^mJe:&  
Vñ` H\$VnE{n \_n(dÖCH\$VnE\_ì` \_`^2&& 4.13

cāturvarṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇakarma vibhāgaśaḥ |  
tasya kartāram api mām viddhyakartāram avyayam || 4.13

cāturvarṇyaṁ: the four divisions of human society; mayā: by Me; sṛṣṭaṁ: created; guṇa: attribute; karma: work; vibhāgaśaḥ: in terms of division; tasya: of that; kartāram: doer; api: although; mām: Me; viddhi: know; akartāram: as the non-doer; avyayaṁ: immortal

**4.13 Depending upon the distribution of the three attributes or guṇas and action, I have created the four castes. Yet, I am to be known as the non-doer, the unchangeable.**

Z \_n\$H\$\_nE {bānpV Z \_oH\$\_\$boññm&  
B{V \_n\$ \_mE^OmZnV H\$\_P^Z^g ~Ü`Vo&& 4.14

na mām karmāṇi limpanti na me karmaphale sprhā |  
iti mām yo 'bhijānāti karmabhir na sa badhyate || 4.14

na: never; mām: Me; karmāṇi: work; limpanti: affect; na: not; me: My; karmaphale: in fruits of action; sprhā : longing for; iti: thus; mām: Me; yaḥ: one who; abhijānāti: understands; karmabhiḥ : by the action; na: never; saḥ: he; badhyate: is bound.

**4.14 I am not affected by any work; nor do I long for the outcome of such work. One who understands this truth about me also does not get caught in the bondage of work.**

Ed\$knEdmH\$V\$H\$\_@nd{n \_wj\_@^: &  
HôE H\$\_Ei Vñ\_nEd\$ndE ndPa\$H\$V\_`^2&& 4.15

evaṁ jñātvā kṛtaṁ karma pūrvair api mumukṣubhiḥ |  
kuru karmai 'va tasmāt tvaṁ pūrvaiḥ pūrvataraṁ kṛtaṁ || 4.15



evaṁ: thus; jñātvā: knowing well; kṛtaṁ: performed; karma: work; pūrvaiḥ: by the ancient people; api: also; mumukṣubhiḥ: by those seeking liberation; kuru: perform; karma: prescribed duty; eva: only; tasmāt: therefore; tvam: you; pūrvaiḥ: by the predecessors; pūrvataraṁ: as in the past; kṛtaṁ: as performed

**4.15 All the wise and liberated souls of ancient times have acted with this understanding and thus attained liberation. Just as the ancients did, perform your duty with this understanding.**

qH\$H\$\_QH\$\_H\$\_IV H\$cl`nB`I`\_nqhVm`&  
VÎnoH\$\_`adu`m`\_`ÁknĒdm`mú`gœe^m/2&& 4.16

kiṁ karma kim akarme 'ti kavayo 'py atra mohitāḥ |  
tat te karma pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvā mokṣyase 'śubhāt || 4.16

kiṁ: what; karma: action; kiṁ: what; akarma: inaction; iti: thus; kavayaḥ: the wise; api: also; atra: in this matter; mohitāḥ: confused; tat: that; te: unto you; karma: action; pravakṣyāmi: I shall explain; yat: which; jñātvā: after knowing; mokṣyase: be liberated; aśubhāt: from ills

**What is action and what is inaction, even the wise are confused. Let me explain to you what action is, knowing which you shall be liberated from all ills.**

H\$\_Ømø{n`~nÕi`\$~nÕi`\$M {dH\$\_Ø: &  
AH\$\_Øü`~nÕi`\$JhZmH\$\_ØmJ{V: && 4.17

karmaṇo hyapi boddhavyaṁ boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ |  
akarmaṇasca boddhavyaṁ gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ || 4.17

karmaṇaḥ: of action; hi: for; api: also; boddhavyaṁ: should be understood; boddhavyaṁ: to be understood; ca: also; vikarmaṇaḥ: wrong action; akarmaṇaḥ: inaction; ca: also; boddhavyaṁ: should be understood; gahanā: mysterious; karmaṇaḥ: of action; gatiḥ: way.

**4.17 The complexities of action are very difficult to understand. Understand fully the nature of proper action by understanding the nature of wrong action and inaction.**



**4.20** *Having given up all attachment to the results of his action, always satisfied and independent, the wise man does not act, though he is engaged in all kinds of action.*

{Zamer`V{MÎmĚ\_mĚ`°\$gdH{aJk: V&  
emra\$Hôdb\$H\$\_HôdPmĥV {H\$ĕ~f\_²V& 4.21

*nirāśīr yatacittātmā tyakta sarva parigrahaḥ ।  
śārīraṁ kevalaṁ karma kurvan nā 'pnoti kilbiṣaṁ ॥ 4.21*

*nirāśīḥ*: without desire for the result; *yata*: controlled; *cittātmā*: mind and consciousness; *tyakta*: giving up; *sarva*: all; *parigrahaḥ*: sense of ownership; *śārīraṁ*: body; *kevalaṁ*: only; *karma*: work; *kurvan*: doing so; *nā*: never; *āpnoti*: acquire; *kilbiṣaṁ*: sin

**4.21** *The person who acts without desire for the result; with his consciousness controlling the mind, giving up all sense of ownership over his possessions and body and only working, incurs no sin.*

`NĀNstom^gYVimUŸUmVrVmo{d\_Ēga: V&  
g\_: {gŌnd{gŌmM HĒdm{n Z {Z~Ū`VoV& 4.22

*yadṛcchā lābha saṁtuṣṭo dvandvātīto vimatsaraḥ ।  
samaḥ siddhāv asiddhau ca kṛtvā 'pi na nibadhyate ॥ 4.22*

*yadṛcchā lābha*: what is obtained unsought; *saṁtuṣṭaḥ*: satisfied; *dvandva*: pairs of opposites; *atī taḥ*: surpassed; *vimatsaraḥ*: free from envy; *samaḥ*: equal; *siddhau*: in success; *asiddhau*: in failure; *ca*: also; *kṛtvā*: after doing; *api*: even; *nā*: never; *nibadhyate*: bound

**4.22** *He who is satisfied with profit which comes of its own accord and who has gone beyond duality, who is free from envy, who is in equanimity both in success and failure, such a person though doing action, is never affected.*

JVg“n`\_P\$` kmZndpñWVMWg: &  
`km nMaV: H\$\_g\_J\$à{dbr`Vo& 4.23

*gatasaṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthitacetasaḥ |*  
*yajñāyā 'carataḥ karma samagram pravilīyate || 4.23*

*gatasaṅgasya*: unattached to the modes of material nature; *muktasya*: of the liberated; *jñānā*: knowledge; *vasthita*: established; *cetasaḥ*: of such spirit; *yajñāyā*: for the sake of sacrifice; *ācarataḥ*: practice; *karma*: work; *samagram*: in total; *pravilīyate*: melts away.

**4.23 The work of a liberated man who is unattached to the modes of material nature and who is fully centered in the ultimate knowledge, who works totally for the sake of sacrifice, merges entirely into the knowledge.**

~€mE\$~€ h{d~€mJh~€UmhV\_2&  
~€p VZ JYVi`\$~€H\$\_g\_mfYZm& 4.24

*brahmā 'rpaṇaṁ brahma havir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam |*  
*brahmai 'va tena gantavyaṁ brahmakarma samādhinā || 4.24*

*brahma*: supreme; *arpaṇaṁ*: offering; *brahma*: supreme; *haviḥ*: oblation; *brahma*: supreme; *agnau*: in the fire of; *brahmaṇā*: by the supreme; *hutaṁ*: offered; *brahma*: supreme; *eva*: only; *tena*: by him; *gantavyaṁ*: to be reached; *brahma*: supreme; *karma*: action; *samādhinā*: by complete absorption

**4.24 The offering, the offered butter to the supreme in the fire of the supreme is offered by the supreme. Certainly, the supreme can be reached by him who is absorbed completely in action.**

Xp\_dlnao`k\$`nQJZ: n`imgVo&  
~€m4mdnao`k\$`kZpdmOw{V & 4.25

*daivam evā 'pare yajñam yoginaḥ paryupāsate |*  
*brahmāgnāv apare yajñam yajñenai 'vo 'pajuhvati || 4.25*

*daivaṁ*: gods; *eva*: only; *apare*: others; *yajñāṁ*: sacrifices; *yoginaḥ*: yogis; *paryupāsate*: worship; *brahma*: supreme; *agnau*: in the fire; *apare*: others; *yajñāṁ*: sacrifice; *yajñena*: by sacrifice; *eva*: only; *upajuhvati*: offer as sacrifice.

**4.25** *Some yogis worship the gods by offering various sacrifices to them, While others worship by offering sacrifices in the fire of the supreme.*

l nānKrpYD` nE` Y` og\$ \_m34fwOw {V &  
eāXnKr{Ydf` nZY` BpYD` m34fwOw {V && 4.26

*śrotrādīnī* 'ndriyāṇy anye saṁyamāgñiṣu juhvati |  
*śabdādīn* viṣayān anyā indriyāgñiṣu juhvati || 4.26

*śrotrādīnī*: organ of hearing; *indriyāṇi*: senses; *anye*: others; *saṁyama*: self discipline; *agniṣu*: in the fire; *juhvati*: offers as sacrifice; *śabdādīn*: sound vibrations; *viṣayān*: objects of sense gratification; *anye*: others; *indriya*: of sense organs; *agniṣu*: in the fire; *juhvati*: sacrifice

**4.26** *Some sacrifice the hearing process and other senses in the fire of equanimity and others offer as sacrifice the objects of the senses, such as sound, in the fire of the sacrifice.*

gdnErpYD` H\$ \_mU ànUH\$ \_mU MmaoV  
AnE\_g\$ \_` nU n4m Ow {V knZXr{nVoV&& 4.27

*sarvāṇi* 'ndriyakarmāṇi prāṇakarmāṇi cā 'pare |  
*ātmasaṁyama* yogāgnau juhvati jñānadīpite || 4.27

*sarvāṇi*: all; *indriya*: senses; *karmāṇi*: actions; *prāṇakarmāṇi*: activities of the life breath; *ca*: also; *apare*: others; *ātmasaṁyama*: self control; *yoga*: yoga; *agnau*: in the fire of; *juhvati*: offers; *jñāna dī pite*: kindled by wisdom.

**4.27** *One who is interested in knowledge offers all the actions due to the senses, including the action of taking in the life breath into the fire of yoga and is engaged in the yoga of the equanimity of the mind.*

---

Xà` ` knñVnnò km` nò` knñVWmaoñ  
ñdnñ` m` kmZ` kmü ` V` : gñeVdñm ñ 4.28

dravyayajñās tapoyajñā yogayajñās tathā 'pare |  
svādhyāya jñānayajñās ca yatayaḥ saṁśita vratāḥ || 4.28

dravya: material wealth; yajñāḥ : sacrifice; tapo: penance; yajñāḥ : sacrifice; yoga: yoga; yajñāḥ: sacrifice; tathā : and; apare: others; svādhyāya: self-study; jñāna: knowledge; yajñāḥ: sacrifice; ca: and; yatayaḥ: striving souls; saṁśita vratāḥ: those of strict vows.

**4.28 There is the sacrifice of material wealth, sacrifice through penance, sacrifice through yoga and other sacrifices while there is sacrifice through self-study and through strict vows**

AnnZoOñ {V àñUşàñUññZşVWmaoñ  
àñUmmZJVr éXñdm àñUm` m` nam` Um ñ 4.29

apāne juhvati prāṇam prāṇe 'pānam tathā 'pare |  
prāṇāpānagatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ || 4.29

apāne: in the out going breath; juhvati: sacrifice; prāṇam: life energy; prāṇe: in the life energy; apānam: the outgoing breath; tathā : thus; apare: others; prāṇa: inhaling; apāna: exhaling; gatī : movement; ruddhvā : after restraining; prāṇāyāma: breath control; parāyaṇāḥ : so inclined

**4.29 There are others who sacrifice the life energy in the form of incoming breath and outgoing breath, thus checking the movement of the incoming and outgoing breaths and controlling the breath.**

Anao{Z` Vñhnam àñUnñàñUññOñ {V ñ  
gdñ` ño` k{dXm` kj {ñVññ`\_fm ñ 4.30

apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati |  
sarve 'py ete yajñāvido yajñakṣapita kalmaṣāḥ || 4.30

*apare*: others; *niyata*: controlled; *āhārāḥ*: eating; *prāṇān*: vital energy; *prāṇeṣu*: in the vital energy; *juhvati*: sacrifice; *sarve api ete*: all of these; *yajñavidāḥ*: those knowing sacrifice; *yajña kṣapita kalmaṣāḥ*: those destroying their sins through sacrifice.

**4.30** *There are others who sacrifice through controlled eating and offering the outgoing breath, life energy. All these people know the meaning of sacrifice and are purified of sin or karma.*

ḥk(eim V^Om`pV ~- gZnVZ\_2&  
Zm šbnHŠenĒ` `kñ` HŨVnŨV` : HġgĪm\_ V& 4.31

*yajñaśiṣṭāmṛta bhujo yānti brahma sanātanam ।  
nā 'yaṁ loka 'sty ayajñasya kuto 'nyaḥ kurusattama ॥ 4.31*

*yajñaśiṣṭa*: left over of sacrifice; *amṛta*: nectar; *bhujaḥ*: one who enjoys; *yānti*: attain; *brahma*: supreme; *sanātanam*: eternal; *na*: not; *ayaṁ*: this; *lokaḥ*: world; *asti*: is; *ayajñasya*: to one who does not sacrifice; *kutaḥ*: where; *anyaḥ*: other; *kuru sattama*: O best among the Kurus

**4.31** *Having tasted the nectar of the results of such sacrifices, they go to the supreme eternal consciousness. This world is not for those who have not sacrificed. How can the other be, Arjuna?*

Edš~hŧ~Ym`km{dVVm~Umo\_Ũ oŧ&  
Hš\_ŨmŨd{Ŧ VnŧgdnZdšknĒdm{d\_nū`goŧ& 4.32

*evaṁ bahuvidhā yajñā vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe ।  
karmajān viddhi tān sarvān evaṁ jñātvā vimokṣyase ॥ 4.32*

*evaṁ*: thus; *bahu*: many; *vidhāḥ*: kinds of; *yajñāḥ*: sacrifice; *vitatā*: explained; *brahmaṇaḥ mukhe*: in the words of the Veda; *karmajān*: born of actions of mind, sense and body; *viddhi*: know; *tān*: those; *sarvān*: all; *evaṁ*: thus; *jñātvā*: after knowing; *vimokṣyase*: will be liberated

**4.32** *Thus, there are many kinds of sacrifices born of work mentioned in the Vedas. Thus, knowing these, one will be liberated.*

l ò n'Đi` \_` mÚkmÁkmZ` k: naŷn &  
gd°H\$ \_m¶ bšnnW°kmZon[ag\_ m° Vo&& 4.33

śreyān dravyamayād yajñāj jñānayajñāḥ param̐tapa |  
sarvaṁ karma 'khilam̐ pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate || 4.33

śreyān: superior; dravyamayāt: material wealth; yajñāt: sacrifice; jñāna yajñāḥ: sacrifice in wisdom; param̐tapa: O subduer of foes; sarvaṁ: all; karma: activities; akhilaṁ: in totality; pārtha: O son of Pritha; jñāne: in wisdom; parisamāpyate: ends in

**4.33 O conqueror of foes, the sacrifice of wisdom is superior to the sacrifice of material wealth. After all, all activities totally end in wisdom.**

V{Ū{Ō à{UnmVz n[aāyāz gōl` m&  
CnXū` p'V VokmZškmZZñVldX{eZ: && 4.34

tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā |  
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninaḥ tattva darśinaḥ || 4.34

tat: that; viddhi: understand; praṇipātena: by approaching a spiritual master; paripraśnena: by questioning; sevayā: by offering service; upadekṣyanti: will advise; te: unto you; jñānaṁ: knowledge; jñāninaḥ: the enlightened; tattva darśinaḥ: the spiritual seers.

**4.34 Understand these truths by approaching a spiritual master, by asking him your questions, by offering service. The enlightened person can initiate the wisdom unto you because he has seen the truth**

`ÁknēdmZ nū\_nh\_ol\$` mñ`{g nñēSēl &  
`z ^v/m` efb Đú` ñ`ñē\_Y` Wmo\_{` && 4.35

yaj jñātvā na punar moham evaṁ yāsyasi pāṇḍava |  
yena bhūtāny aśeṣeṇa draṁsyasyātmanyatho mayi || 4.35

yaj: which; jñātvā: after knowing; na: not; punaḥ: again; moham̐: desire; evaṁ: thus; yāsyasi: shall attain; pāṇḍava: O son of Pandu; yena: by which; bhūtāni: living entities; aśeṣeṇa: totally; draṁsyasi: will see; ātmani: within yourself; atho: then; mayi: in Me

**4.35 O Pandava, knowing this you will never suffer from desire or illusion, you will know that all living beings are in the supreme, in Me.**



api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpakṛttamaḥ |  
sarvaṁ jñāna plavenai 'va vṛjinam saṁtariṣyasi || 4.36

api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpakṛttamaḥ |  
sarvaṁ jñāna plavenai 'va vṛjinam saṁtariṣyasi || 4.36

api: even; cet: if; asi: you are; pāpebhyaḥ: of sinners; sarvebhyaḥ: of all; pāpa: sins; kṛttamaḥ: greatest sinner; sarvaṁ: all; jñāna plavena: by the boat of knowledge; eva: only; vṛjinam: the ocean of miseries; saṁtariṣyasi: you will cross.

**4.36 Even if you are the most sinful of all sinners, you will certainly cross completely the ocean of miseries through the boat of knowledge.**

yathai 'dhāmsi samiddho 'gnir bhasmasāt kurute 'rjuna |  
jñānāgniḥ sarva karmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute tathā || 4.37

yathai 'dhāmsi samiddho 'gnir bhasmasāt kurute 'rjuna |  
jñānāgniḥ sarva karmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute tathā || 4.37

yathā: as; edhāmsi: firewood; samiddhaḥ: blazing; agniḥ: fire; bhasmasāt: ashes; kurute: does; arjuna: O Arjuna; jñāna: knowledge; agniḥ: fire; sarva: all; karmāṇi: actions; bhasmasāt: ashes; kurute: does; tathā: in the same way.

**4.37 Just as a blazing fire turns firewood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of wisdom burn to ashes all actions, all your karma.**

na hi jñānena sadṛśaṁ pavitraṁ iha vidyate |  
tat svayaṁ yogasaṁsiddhah kālenā 'tmani vindati || 4.38

na hi jñānena sadṛśaṁ pavitraṁ iha vidyate |  
tat svayaṁ yogasaṁsiddhah kālenā 'tmani vindati || 4.38

na: not; hi: certainly; jñānena: with knowledge; sadṛśaṁ: similar; pavitraṁ: pure; iha: here; vidyate: exists; tat: that; svayaṁ: himself; yoga: in devotion; saṁsiddhaḥ: purified; kālena: in course time; ātmani: within self; vindati: acquires.

**4.38 Truly, in this world, there is nothing as pure as wisdom. One who has matured to know this enjoys in himself in due course of time.**

I Ōmclm, ^VokmZ\$VĒna: g\$ VpíĐ` : &  
kmZ\$baÜdmnan\$emíV\_{MaÜm(YJÀN\$V && 4.39

śraddhāvāml labhate jñānaṁ tatparaḥ saṁyatendriyaḥ |  
jñānaṁ labdhvā parāṁ śāntim acireṇā 'dhigacchati || 4.39

śraddhāvān: faithful person; labhate: achieves; jñānaṁ: knowledge; tatparaḥ: attached; saṁyata: controlled; indriyaḥ: senses; jñānaṁ: knowledge; labdhvā: having achieved; parāṁ: supreme; śāntim: peace; acireṇa: without delay; adhigacchati: attains

**4.39 A person with śraddhā (courageous faith) achieves wisdom and has control over the senses. Achieving wisdom, without delay, he attains supreme peace.**

Aküml ŌYmZü gē`nē\_m{dZī`{V &  
Zm \$bñH\$epñV Z namZ gñ \$gē`nē\_Z: && 4.40

ajñāś cā 'śraddadhānaś ca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati |  
nā 'yaṁ loka 'sti na paro na sukhaṁ saṁśayātmanaḥ || 4.40

ajñāḥ: ignorant; ca: and; aśraddadhānaḥ: one having no faith; ca: and; saṁśayātmā: doubting soul; vinaśyati: perish; na: not; ayaṁ: this; lokaḥ: world; asti: is; na: not; paraḥ: next; na: not; sukhaṁ: happiness; saṁśayātmanaḥ: of the doubting soul.

**4.40 Those who have no wisdom and faith, who always have doubts, are destroyed. There is no happiness in this world or the next.**

`nūlg\$`ñVH\$\_m\$kmZgñN\$gē`\_2&  
Anē\_dYV\$Z H\$\_m\$U {Z~YpíV YZÄO` && 4.41

yogaśaṁnyasta karmāṇaṁ jñānaśaṁchinnasaṁśayaṁ |  
ātmaśantaṁ na karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanamjaya || 4.41

yoga śaṁnyasta karmāṇaṁ: on who has dedicated his actions to god according to Karma yoga; jñānaśaṁchinna saṁśayaṁ: who doubts have been cleared by knowledge; ātmaśantaṁ: self possessed; na: not; karmāṇi: actions; nibadhnanti: bind; dhanamjaya: O Dhananjaya

**4.41** *O winner of riches, one who has renounced the fruits of his actions, whose doubts are destroyed, who is well-situated in the self, is not bound by his actions.*

Vñ\_mKkZgš^y\$öVñW\$knZm(gZñĒ\_Z: ĩ  
{Nîdz\$gē`\$`m\_l(Vöññ>^mV ĩ 4.42

*tasmād ajñānasambhūtaṁ hṛtsthaṁ jñānāsinaṁ 'tmanaḥ |*  
*chittvai 'naṁ saṁśayaṁ yogam ātiṣṭha 'ttiṣṭha bhārata || 4.42*

*tasmāt*: therefore; *ajñāna*: ignorance; *sambhūtaṁ*: born of; *hṛtsthaṁ*: situated in the heart; *jñānāsinaṁ*: by the sword of knowledge; *ātmanaḥ*: of the self; *chittvā*: having cutting off; *enam*: this; *saṁśayaṁ*: doubt; *yogam*: in yoga; *ātiṣṭha*: be firm; *uttiṣṭha*: stand up; *bhārata*: O descendant of Bharata

**4.42** *O descendant of Bharata, therefore, stand up, be situated in yoga. Armed with the sword of knowledge; cut the doubt born of ignorance that exists in your heart.*

B{V I\_r\_ØJdØrVmgñ{ZfĒgw~{dÚmî n\$`mlemóo  
I rHñUñDĒgšñKokñZH\$\_g\$`ng`m\_lnoZm\_MVWñĒ`m: ĩ2Ÿ  
*iti śrī mad bhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām*  
*yogaśāstre śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde jñānakarma saṁnyāsa yoga nāma*  
*caturtho'dhyāyaḥ ||*

*In the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad gita, the knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the fourth discourse designated:*

**Jñānakarmasanyāsa Yogaḥ**

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## Verses Of Gita Chapter - 5

AW nÄM\_m0`m :

gš`mg`mJ :

**Sanyāsa Yogaḥ**

AOE CdmM &

gš`mg\$H\$\_0n\$H\$U nÄ`m\$M eg(g &  
`ÄN0 EV`mb\$VÍ\_0~h gZ{üV\_2&& 5.1

*arjuna uvāca*

*saṁnyāsaṁ karmaṇāṁ kṛṣṇa punar yogaṁ ca śaṁsasi |  
yac chreya etayor ekaṁ tan me brūhi suniścitaṁ || 5.1*

*arjuna uvāca:* Arjuna said; *saṁnyāsaṁ:* renunciation; *karmaṇāṁ:* of all actions; *kṛṣṇa:* O Krishna; *punaḥ:* again; *yogaṁ:* devotion; *ca:* also; *śaṁsasi:* praising; *yat:* which; *śreyaḥ:* beneficial; *etayoḥ:* of the two; *ekaṁ:* one; *tat:* that; *me:* to me; *brūhi:* please tell; *sunīścitaṁ:* definitely

**5.1 Arjuna said: Oh Krishna, you asked me to renounce work first and then you ask me to work with devotion. Will you now please tell me, one way or the other, which of the two will work for me?**

I r ^JdmZdmM &

gš`mg: H\$\_m0ü {Z:I 0 gH\$andw`m &  
V`n0VwH\$\_gš`mgmEH\$\_m0no {d{eî`Vo&& 5.2

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*

*saṁnyāsaḥ karmayogaś ca niḥśreyasakarāv ubhau |  
tayos tu karmasaṁnyāsāt karmayogo viśiṣyate || 5.2*

*śrī bhagavān uvāca:* Lord Krishna said; *saṁnyāsaḥ:* renunciation; *karmayogaḥ:* work in devotion; *ca:* also; *niḥśreyasakarāv:* for liberation; *ubhau:* both; *tayoḥ:* of the two; *tu:* but; *karmasaṁnyāsāt:* between work and renunciation; *karmayogaḥ:* work in devotion; *viśiṣyate:* better

*5.2 Krishna says: The renunciation of work and work in devotion are both good for liberation. But, of the two, work in devotional service is better than renunciation of work.*

kô : g {ZĒ` gŹ` mgr `mZ Ūŋi>Z H\$ŋ~{V Ź  
{ZŪŲŪm(h \_hm~nhmŋgŋ ſ~ŶŶŋĒā\_Ā` VoŹ& 5.3

*jñeyaḥ sa nityasaṁnyāsī yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati ।  
nirdvandvo hi mahābāho sukhaṁ bandhāt pramucyate ॥ 5.3*

*jñeyaḥ*: should be known; *saḥ*: he; *nitya*: always; *saṁnyāsī*: renouncer; *yaḥ*: who; *na*: never; *dveṣṭi*: hates; *na*: never; *kāṅkṣati*: desires; *nirdvandvaḥ*: free from all dualities; *hi*: certainly; *mahābāho*: mighty-armed one; *sukhaṁ*: easily; *bandhāt*: from bondage; *pramucyate*: completely liberated

*5.3 He who neither hates nor desires the fruits of his activities has renounced. Such a person, free from all dualities, easily overcomes material bondage and is completely liberated, Oh Arjuna!*

gnL3`~`mŋ nW½~nbm àdXpŲV Z npĒSŶmŹ  
EH\$\_B` npŋWV: gâ` Ju` nŋdŲXVo\ſŋ\_²Ź& 5.4

*sāmkhyayogau prthag bālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ ।  
ekam apy āsthitaḥ samyag ubhayor vindate phalam ॥ 5.4*

*sāmkhyayogau*: samkhya system and; *yoga*: work; *prthag*: different; *bālāḥ*: less intelligent; *pravadanti*: say; *na*: not; *paṇḍitāḥ*: learned; *ekam*: one; *api*: even; *āsthitaḥ*: situated; *samyak*: complete; *ubhayor*: of both; *vindate*: enjoys; *phalam*: result

*5.4 Only the ignorant speaks of the path of action to be different from the path of renunciation. Those who are actually learned say that both action and renunciation lead to the same truth.*

ḥḡmLḥ; ànḥ`VorñWmZ\$VŪmḡp{n Jā`Voḥ  
EH\$ḡmLḥ`\$M`mḡ\$M` : nī`{V g nī`{V ḥḡ 5.5

yat sām̐khyaiḥ prāpyate sthānam tad yogair api gamyate |  
ekam sām̐khyam ca yogam ca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati || 5.5

yat: what; sām̐khyaiḥ: by Sankhya system; prāpyate: get; sthānam: position; tat: that; yogaiḥ: by work in devotion; api: also; gamyate: can reach; ekam: one; sām̐khyam: sankhya system; ca: and; yogam: work in devotion; ca: and; yaḥ: who; paśyati: sees; saḥ: he; paśyati: sees

**5.5 He who knows, knows that the state reached by renunciation and action are one and the same. State reached by renunciation can also be achieved by action, know them to be at same level and see them as they are.**

g\$`mḡñVw\_hm-nhnoXwI \_māw`mḡV:ḥ  
`mḡ`P\$no\_ḡZ~ḡ Z {Maḡm{YJĀN\$V ḥḡ 5.6

sam̐nyāsaḥ tu mahābāho duḥkham āptum ayogataḥ |  
yogayukto munir brahma na cireṇā 'dhigacchati || 5.6

sam̐nyāsaḥ: renunciation; tu: but; mahābāho: mighty-armed one; duḥkham: misery; āptum: afflicts with; ayogataḥ: without devotion; yogayuktaḥ: engaged in devotion; muniḥ: wise; brahma: supreme; nacireṇa: without delay; adhigacchati: attains

**5.6 Renunciation without devotional service afflicts one with misery, Oh mighty-armed one. The wise person engaged in devotional service attains the Supreme without delay.**

`mḡ`P\$no{deŌñē\_m{d{OVñē\_m{OVpīḡ` : ḥḡ  
gd°Vñē\_^Vñē\_mHāḡP{n Z {bḡ`Voḥḡ 5.7

yogayukto viśuddhātmā vijitātmā jitendriyaḥ |  
sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā kurvannapi na lipyate || 5.7

yogayuktaḥ: engaged in work with devotion; viśuddhātmā: a man of purified mind; vijita: self-controlled; atma: soul; jitendriyaḥ: conquered the senses; sarvabhūtātmā: to all living

beings; *bhūtātma*: compassionate; *kurvan api*: though engaged in work, *na*: never; *lipyate*: entangled

*5.7 The person engaged in devoted service, beyond concepts pure and impure, self-controlled and who has conquered the senses is compassionate and loves everyone. Although engaged in work, he is never entangled.*

Zp {H\$#nEH\$am\_r{V`P\$no\_Y`V VId{dV2k  
nı́ Āl İdYınnE{AOKpYıJANı́ndnÄcegZ2k& 5.8

nai 'va kiñcit karomī 'ti yukto manyeta tattvavit |  
paśyan śrñvan sprśaṇ jighraṇaśṇan gacchan svapaṇ śvasan || 5.8

*na*: never; *eva*: certainly; *kimcit*: anything; *karomi*: I do; *iti*: thus; *yuktah*: engaged; *manyeta*: thinks; *tattvavit*: one who knows the truth; *paśyan*: seeing; *śṛṇvan*: hearing; *spṛśan*: touching; *jighran*: smelling; *aśnan*: eating; *gacchan*: going; *svapan*: dreaming; *śvasan*: breathing

àbnpYdgYUJ#pW\_f{P\_fP{n V  
B{YD`nUrpYD`nWfwdVfV B{V Yma`Z<sup>2</sup>V& 5.9

*pralapan viṣṭjan gr̥hṇann unmiṣan nimiṣann api |*  
*indriyānī 'ndriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan || 5.9*

*pralapan*: talking; *visṛjan*: giving up; *grihṇan*: accepting; *unmishan*: opening; *nimiṣan*: closing; *api*: though; *indriyāṇi*: the senses; *indriyārtheṣu*: in gratifying senses; *vartanta*: are engaged; *iti*: thus; *dhāraṇ*: considering

5.8, 9 *One who knows the truth, though engaged in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, dreaming, and breathing knows that he never does anything. While talking, letting go, receiving, opening, closing, he considers that the senses are engaged in gratification.*

~«È`mYm` H\$`nPU g`±È`ŠĖdmH\$anV` : &  
 {bß`VoZ g nmnZ nÜnI{`dm^gm&& 5.10

*brahmaṇyādhāya karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā karoti yaḥ |*  
*lipyate na sa pāpena padmapatram ivā 'mbhasā || 5.10*

*brahmaṇi*: Eternal Consciousness; *ādhāya*: surrendering to; *karmāṇi*: actions; *saṅgaṁ*: attachment; *tyaktvā*: giving up; *karoti*: does; *yaḥ*: who; *lipyate*: affected; *na*: never; *saḥ*: he; *pāpena*: by sin; *padma*: lotus; *patram*: leaf; *iva*: like; *ambhasā*: water

**5.10 He, who acts without attachment, giving up and surrendering to the eternal consciousness, He is never affected by sin, in the same way that the lotus leaf is not affected by water.**

H\$m`Z`Zgm~Ö`mHödb[apIÖ`p{n`&  
 `mUJ: H\$\_HödpV g`\$È`ŠĖdmE\_eÖ`&& 5.11

*kāyena manasā buddhyā kevalair indriyair api |*  
*yoginaḥ karma kurvanti saṅgaṁ tyaktvā 'tmaśuddhaye || 5.11*

*kāyena*: by the body; *manasā*: by the mind; *buddhyā*: by the intellect; *kevalaiḥ*: only; *indriyaiḥ*: by the senses; *api* also; *yoginaḥ*: yogis; *karma*: action; *kurvanti*: perform; *saṅgaṁ*: attachment; *tyaktvā*: having abandoned; *ātmaśuddhaye*: for the purification of the self

**5.11 The yogis, giving up attachment, act with the body, mind, intelligence, even with the senses for the purpose of self-purification.**

`P\$: H\$\_\$Š\$ŠĖ`ŠĖdmempV`mnV Z{ÖH\$`\_2  
 A`P\$: H\$m`H\$maU`\$bog°\$m(Z~Ü`Vo&& 5.12

*yuktaḥ karmaphalaṁ tyaktvā śāntim āpnoti naiṣṭhikīm |*  
*ayuktaḥ kāmakāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate || 5.12*

*yuktaḥ*: one steadfast in devotion; *karma*: action; *phalaṁ*: fruit; *tyaktvā*: giving up; *śāntim*: peace; *āpnoti*: achieves; *naiṣṭhikīm*: established; *ayuktaḥ*: one not steadfast in devotion; *kāmakāreṇa*: for enjoying the fruits of the action; *phale*: fruit; *saktaḥ*: attached; *nibadhyate*: becomes entangled



5.12 *One who is engaged in devotion, gives up attachment to outcome of one's actions and is centered, is at peace. One who is not engaged in devotion, attached to the outcome of one's action becomes entangled.*

gdP\$ \_n@ \_Zgm g` ñ` ññVogl \$der &  
ZdÜmonwXbr Zp HdP H\$ma` Z<sup>2</sup>&& 5.13

sarvakarmāṇi manasā saṁnyasyā 'ste sukhaṁ vaśī |  
navadvāre pure dehī nai 'va kurvan na kārayan || 5.13

*sarva*: all; *karmāṇi*: activities; *manasā*: by the mind; *saṁnyasya*: giving up; *āste*: remains; *sukhaṁ*: in happiness; *vaśī*: who is controlled; *navadvāre*: of nine gates; *pure*: in the city; *dehī*: body; *na*: never; *eva*: surely; *kurvan*: doing; *na*: never; *kārayan*: causing to be done

5.13 *One who is controlled, giving up all the activities of the mind, surely remains in happiness in the city of nine gates (body), neither doing anything nor causing anything to be done.*

Z H\$VEd\$Z H\$mU bmbHn` gD{V à^w &  
Z H\$\_c\$og\$ mJ\$ñd^mñVwàdV9o&& 5.14

na kartṛtvaṁ na karmāṇi lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ ।  
na karmaphala saṁyogaṁ svabhāvas tu pravartate ॥ 5.14

*na*: never; *karṭṛtvam*: of doing; *na*: not; *karmāṇi*: activities; *lokasya*: of the people; *srjati*: creates; *prabhuh*: master; *na*: not; *karma*: activities; *phala*: fruit; *samyogaṃ*: connection; *svabhāvah*: nature; *tu*: but; *pravartate*: act

5.14 *The master does not create activities nor makes people do nor connects with the outcome of the actions. All this is enacted by the material nature.*

ZnXInHn {MEnmSZ Md gHVS{d^w V&  
AknZZndV\$knZSVZ \_wpIV OIVd: V& 5.15

nā 'datte kasyacit pāpaṃ na cai áva sukr̥taṃ vibhuḥ |  
ajñānenā 'vr̥taṃ jñānaṃ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ || 5.15

---

na: never; ādatte: accepts; kasyacit: anyone's; pāpaṁ: sins; na: not; ca: and; eva: surely; sukṛtaṁ: good deeds; vibhuḥ: lord; ajñānena: by ignorance; āvṛtaṁ: covered; jñānaṁ: knowledge; tena: by that; muhyanti: are confused; jantavaḥ: living beings

**5.15 The Lord, surely, neither accepts anyone's sins nor good deeds. Living beings are confused by the ignorance that covers the knowledge.**

knZz VwVXknZ\$`fnsZmēV\_nē\_Z: &  
Vfm\_mXĒ`dÁknZ\$àH\$ne`{V VĒna\_2&& 5.16

jñānena tu tad ajñānaṁ yeṣāṁ nāśitam ātmanaḥ |  
teṣāṁ ādityavaj jñānaṁ prakāśayati tat param || 5.16

jñānena: by knowledge; tu: but; tad: that; ajñānaṁ: ignorance; yeṣāṁ: whose; nāśitaṁ: destroyed; ātmanaḥ: of the self; teṣāṁ: their; ādityavat: like the rising sun; jñānaṁ: knowledge; prakāśayati: throws light on; tat param: that supreme consciousness

**5.16 Whose ignorance is destroyed by the knowledge, their knowledge, like the rising sun, throws light on the supreme consciousness.**

VX2-Ī`ñVXnē\_ZñV{PōmVĒnam Um &  
JANĒ`nāZandm knZ{ZYPH\$e\_fm && 5.17

tadbuddhayas tadātmānas tanniṣṭhās tatparāyaṇāḥ |  
gacchanty apunarāvṛttiṁ jñānanirdhūtakalmaṣāḥ || 5.17

tad buddhyaḥ: one whose intelligence is in the supreme; tad ātmānaḥ: whose mind is in the supreme; tanniṣṭhāḥ: whose faith is in the supreme; tat parāyaṇāḥ: who has surrendered to the supreme; gacchanti: go; apunarāvṛttiṁ: liberation; jñāna: knowledge; nirdhūta: cleanses; kalmaṣāḥ: misunderstandings

**5.17 One whose intelligence, mind, faith are in the Supreme and one who has surrendered to the Supreme, his misunderstandings are cleansed through knowledge and he goes towards liberation.**

{dÚm(dZ` gñPo~m÷UoJ{d hpñV{Z &  
e{Z Mp dēnnHō M npēSVm g\_X{eZ: ॥ 5.18

vidyāvinayasampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini |  
śuni cai 'va śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ || 5.18

vidyā: knowledge; vinaya: compassion; sampanne: full with; brāhmaṇe: in the brahmana; gavi: in the cow; hastini: in the elephant; śuni: in the dog; ca: and; eva: surely; śvapāke: in the dog-eater; ca: and; paṇḍitāḥ: learned; sama: equal; darśinaḥ: see

**5.18 One who is full of knowledge and compassion sees equally the learned brāhmaṇa, the cow, the elephant, the dog and the dog-eater.**

Bhp d V{OṚ: gJn) ` fñsgñā` opñVV\$ \_Z: ॥  
{ZXnf\$ {h g\_\$~€ Vñ\_m~€ {U VopñVVm ॥ 5.19

ihai 'va tair jitaḥ sargo yeṣāṁ sāmye sthitaṁ manaḥ |  
nir-doṣaṁ hi samaṁ brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ || 5.19

iha: in this life; eva: surely; taiḥ: by them; jitaḥ: conquered; sargaḥ: birth and death; yeṣāṁ: of whose; sāmye: in equanimity; sthitaṁ: situated; manaḥ: mind; nir doṣaṁ: flawless; hi: surely; samaṁ: in equanimity; brahma: supreme; tasmāt: therefore; brahmaṇi: in the supreme; te: they; sthitāḥ: situated

**5.19 In this life, surely, those whose minds are situated in equanimity have conquered birth and death. They are flawless like the Supreme and therefore, are situated in the Supreme.'**

Z àōī` pĕā` šānB` ZnŦŦŦānB` Mnā` \_2 ॥  
pñVā~{Ŧāg\$ \_T~€ {d×€ {U pñVV: ॥ 5.20

na prahr̥ṣyet priyaṁ prāpya no 'dvijet prāpya cā 'priyam |  
sthira-buddhir asaṁmūḍho brahmavid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ || 5.20

na: never; *prahr̥ṣyet*: rejoice; *priyaṁ*: like; *prāpya*: achieving; *no*: not; *udvijet*: agitated; *prāpya*: achieving; *ca*: and; *apriyaṁ*: the unpleasant; *sthirabuddhiḥ*: steady intelligence; *asaṁmūḍhaḥ*: undeluded; *brahmaavid*: one who knows the Supreme; *brahmaṇi*: in the Supreme; *sthitaḥ*: situated

**5.20 One who does not rejoice at achieving something he likes nor gets agitated on getting something he does not like, who is of steady intelligence, who is not deluded, one who knows the Supreme, is situated in the Supreme.**

~møñne)dg°\$ñē\_m{dYXÈ`nē\_{Z`Ègñl\_2`&  
g ~«`ñl`P\$ñē\_mgñl\_j`\_íZWol&& 5.21

*bāhyasparśeṣv asaktātmā vindatyātmani yat sukham |*  
*sa brahmayoga yuktātmā sukham akṣayam aśnute || 5.21*

*bāhya*: outer; *sparśeṣu*: sense pleasures; *asaktātmā*: not attached; *vindati*: enjoys; *ātmani*: in the Self; *yat*: that; *sukham*: happiness; *saḥ*: he; *brahma yoga*: engaged in the Supreme; *yuktātmā*: self-connected; *sukham*: happiness; *akṣayaṁ*: unlimited; *aśnute*: enjoys

**5.21 One who is not attached to the outer world sense pleasures, who enjoys in the Self, in that happiness, he is self-connected and engaged in the Supreme and enjoys unlimited happiness.**

`o{h gñeOm^ñlñXwl`ñl` Ed Vol&  
AnÚYVdYV: HññVò Z Vññwa\_Vo~ñl: && 5.22

*ye hi saṁsparśajā bhogā duḥkhayonaya eva te |*  
*ādyantavantaḥ kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ || 5.22*

*ye*: those; *hi*: surely; *saṁsparśajāḥ*: by contact with the senses; *bhogāḥ*: enjoyments; *duḥkha*: misery; *yonayaḥ*: sources of; *eva*: surely; *te*: they are; *ādyā*: beginning; *anta*: end; *vantaḥ*: subject to; *kaunteya*: son of Kunti; *na*: not; *teṣu*: in those; *ramate*: enjoys; *budhaḥ*: intelligent person

**5.22 The intelligent person surely does not enjoy the sense pleasures, enjoyments which are sources of misery and which are subject to beginning and end.**

ṣaknoti 'hai 'va yaḥ soḍhum prāk śarīravimokṣaṇāt |  
kāmakrodhodbhavaṁ vegaṁ sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ || 5.23

śaknoti 'hai 'va yaḥ soḍhum prāk śarīravimokṣaṇāt |  
kāmakrodhodbhavaṁ vegaṁ sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ || 5.23

śaknoti: able to do; iha eva: in this body; yaḥ: one who; soḍhum: tolerate; prāk: before; śarīra: body; vimokṣaṇāt: give up; kāma: desire; krodha: anger; udbhavaṁ: generated from; vegaṁ: urge; sa: he; yuktaḥ: well-situated; saḥ: he; sukhī: happy; naraḥ: man

**5.23 Before leaving this present body, if one is able to tolerate the urges of material senses and check the force of desire and anger, he is well situated and he is happy in this world.**

yo 'ntaḥsukho 'ntarārāmas tathā 'ntarjyotir eva yaḥ |  
sa yogī brahmanirvāṇaṁ brahmabhūto 'dhigacchati || 5.24

yo 'ntaḥsukho 'ntarārāmas tathā 'ntarjyotir eva yaḥ |  
sa yogī brahmanirvāṇaṁ brahmabhūto 'dhigacchati || 5.24

yaḥ: who; antaḥ sukhaḥ: happy from within; antarārāmaḥ: active within; tathā: as well as; antarjyotiḥ: illumined within; eva: surely; yaḥ: who; saḥ: he; yogī: mystic; brahma nirvāṇaṁ: liberated in the Supreme; brahma bhūtaḥ: self realized; adhigacchati: attains

**5.24 One who is happy from within, active within as well as illumined within, surely, is a yogi (united in mind body and spirit) and he is liberated in the Supreme, is self-realized and attains the Supreme.**

labhante brahmanirvāṇaṁ ṛṣayaḥ kṣīṇakalmaṣāḥ |  
chinnadvaidhā yatātmāṇaḥ sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ || 5.25

labhante brahmanirvāṇaṁ ṛṣayaḥ kṣīṇakalmaṣāḥ |  
chinnadvaidhā yatātmāṇaḥ sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ || 5.25

labhante: achieve; brahma nirvāṇaṁ: liberation in the Supreme; ṛṣayaḥ: who are active within; kṣīṇakalmaṣāḥ: devoid of sins; chinna: torn off; dvaidhā: duality; yatātmāṇaḥ: engaged in self-realization; sarva: all; bhūta: living beings; hite: for the welfare; ratāḥ: engaged

5.25 *The holy men whose sins have been destroyed are working for the welfare of other beings, those who are self-restrained and have cleared all their doubts and dualities attain the eternal happiness of God, Nityānanda of Divine.*

$$A(\text{V}_{\text{no}} - \frac{1}{2} \text{ZnO}) \text{dV}_{\text{O}} \text{dXV}_{\text{Ni}} \text{Zm}^2 \approx 5.26$$

kāma krodha viyuktānām yatīnām yatacetasām ।  
abhito brahmanirvānaṁ vartate viditātmanām ॥ 5.26

*kāma*: desire; *krodha*: anger; *viyuktānām*: one freed from; *yatinām*: of the ascetics; *yata cetasām*: with the thoughts controlled; *abhitāḥ*: on all sides; *brahma nirvāṇam*: absolute freedom; *vartate*: exists; *viditātmanām*: of those who have realized the Self

5.26 *They who are free from lust and anger, who have subdued the mind and senses, and who have known the Self, easily attain liberation.*

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{n}n\tilde{m}H\tilde{E}dm \sim \{h-n\} \tilde{m} \tilde{u}j \text{ vedn}^{\prime}Vao^{\wedge}ndno \text{ } \& \\ \grave{a}nUmmZmg\_mH\tilde{E}dmZmg\grave{n}\grave{a} \text{ } \acute{Y}VaMnfjUm \text{ } \& 5.27 \end{aligned}$$

*sparsān kṛtvā bahir bāhyāmś cakṣuś cai 'vā 'ntare bhruvoḥ |*  
*prānāpānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyantaracārinau || 5.27*

*spārśān*: external sense objects; *kṛtvā*: keeping; *bahiḥ*: external; *bāhyān*: external; *cakṣuḥ*: eyes; *ca*: and; *eva*: surely; *antare*: within; *bhruvoḥ*: eyebrows; *prāṇāpānau*: inward and outward breath; *samau*: suspending; *kṛtvā*: doing; *nāsābhyantara*: within the nostrils; *cāriṇau*: moving;

$\{dJV\Delta n\}^{\wedge} H\Delta n^{\circ} : gXm_{\mathcal{P}} Ed g : \mathbb{R} \quad 5.28$

yatendriya manobuddhir munir mokṣa parāyaṇaḥ |  
vigatecchā bhaya krodho yah sadā mukta eva saḥ || 5.28

yata: controlled; indriya: senses; mano: mind; buddhiḥ: intelligence; muniḥ the sage; mokṣa: liberation; parāyaṇaḥ: aiming; vigata: free from; icchā: desires; bhaya: fear; krodah: anger; yaḥ: one who; sadā: always; muktaḥ: liberated; eva: certainly; saḥ: he is

*5.27,28 Shutting out all external sense objects, keeping the eyes and vision concentrated between the two eyebrows, suspending the inward and outward breaths within the nostrils and thus controlling the mind, senses and intelligence, the transcendental who is aiming at liberation, becomes free from desire, fear and the by-product of desire and fear, anger all three. One who is always in this state is certainly liberated.*

^n0\$ha\$`kVngn\$gd0nH\$hoea\_2V&  
güX\$gd0VnZn\$knEdm\_n\$emV\_ÄN\$V V& 5.29

*bhoktāraṁ yajñatapasāṁ sarvaloka maheśvaram |  
suhṛdaṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati || 5.29*

bhoktāraṁ: one who enjoys; yajña: sacrifice; tapasāṁ: penance; sarva: all; loka: worlds; maheśvārāṁ: lord; suhṛdaṁ: benefactor; sarva: all; bhūtānāṁ: living beings; jñātvā: knowing; mām: me; śāntim: peace; ṛcchati: achieves

*5.29 One who knowing Me as the purpose of sacrifice and penance, as the lord of all the worlds and the benefactor of all the living beings, achieves peace.*

B{V I r\_ØJd0rVngn{ZfEgw~«-{dÚm n\$`n0emóo  
I rH\$U nO2g\$lnKog\$`ng`n0n0Zm\_nÄM\_n0Ü`m : V&2V

*iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām  
yogaśāstre śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde saṁnyāsa yogo nāma  
pañcamo 'dhyāyaḥ ||*

*In the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad gita, the knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the fifth discourse designated:*

**Sanyāsa Yogaḥ**

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## Verses Of Gita Chapter - 6

AW fõm ð`m :

Ü`mZ`mJ :

Dhyāna Yogaḥ

I r ^JdmZdmM

AZmI V: H\$ Q\$S\$H\$m ^H\$ Q\$S\$H\$m V` : &

g g\$ mgr M`m r M Z {Za{Z^MmH\$ : & 6.1

śrī bhagavān uvāca

anāśritaḥ karma phalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ |

sa sanyāsī ca yogī ca na niragnir na cā 'kriyaḥ || 6.1

śrī bhagavān uvāca: the Lord said; anāśritaḥ: without shelter; karma: action; phalaṁ: fruit; kāryaṁ: obligated; karma: work; karoti: performs; yaḥ: who; saḥ: he; saṁnyāsī: ascetic; ca: and; yogī: one engaged in yoga; ca: and; na: not; nir: without; agniḥ: fire; na: not; ca: and; akriyaḥ: without work

**6.1 Bhagavān says:** *One who performs actions without being attached to its outcome is an ascetic. He is a religious performer of purification of mind.*

*One who has stopped performing any actions, one who doesn't accept the sacred fire and doesn't perform his rituals is neither an ascetic nor a karma yogi, a sage immersed in action.*

`sg\$ mg\_{V ànhp n)SV\$ {d{Ö nmEsd &

Z øg\$ ñVg' ènm`m r ^d{V H\$üZ & 6.2

yaṁ saṁnyāsam iti prāhur yogaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava |

na hy asaṁnyastasaṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana || 6.2

yaṁ: what; saṁnyāsam: renunciation; iti: thus; prāhuḥ: they say; yogaṁ: linking with the Supreme; taṁ: that; viddhi: you should know; pāṇḍava: O son of Pandu; na: never; hi: certainly; asaṁnyasta: without renouncing; saṅkalpaḥ: self interest; yogī: one engaged in yoga; bhavati: becomes; kaścana: anyone



**6.2 O Pandava, renunciation leads to the state of yoga where one is linking oneself with the Supreme. This union with the Divine can happen only when you renounce self interest.**

Ānēēj nō pō nṣH\$ Ḥ\$ṁU\_ā`Vo  
 `nōnē\$Tā` Vñ`p e\_: H\$ṁU\_ā`Vo 6.3

ārukṣor muner yogaṁ karma kāraṇam ucyate |  
 yogārūḍhasya tasyai 'va śamaḥ kāraṇam ucyate || 6.3

ārukṣoḥ: of one who has just begun yoga; muneḥ: of the sage; yogaṁ: yoga system; karma: work; kāraṇam: cause; ucyate: is said to be; yoga: yoga; arūḍhasya: of one who has attained; tasya: his; eva: certainly; śamaḥ: cessation of all activities; kāraṇam: cause; ucyate: is said to be

**6.3 A person who initially wants to start practicing the yoga system laid down by the sages should carry out all activities in line with that system. Activities for all other reasons will cease.**

`Xm{h ZpŃD` nVfWZ H\$ ŃdZf, nVo  
 gd@' ēng\$ mgr `nōnē\$TāVXnā`Vo 6.4

yadā hi ne 'ndriyārtheṣu na karmasv anuṣajjate |  
 sarvasaṁkalpasamnyāsī yogārūḍhas tado 'cyate || 6.4

yadā: when; hi: certainly; na: not; indriyārtheṣu: in sense gratification; na: never; karmasu: in fruitive activities; anuṣajjate: does necessarily engage; sarva saṁkalpa: all material desires; samnyāsī: renouncer; yogārūḍhaḥ: elevated in yoga; tadā: at that time; ucyate: is said to be

**6.4 Any one is said to have attained the state of yoga when, having renounced all material desires, he neither acts for sense gratification nor engages in result focused activities.**

CŌaXñĒ\_ZñĒ\_mZ\$ZñĒ\_mZ\_dgnX`W²Ÿ  
 AnĒ\_d ōñĒ\_Zno~ŸYanĒ\_d [anmĒ\_Z: && 6.5

uddhared ātmanā 'tmānaṁ na 'tmānam avasādayet |  
 ātmai 'va hyātmano bandhur ātmai 'va ripur ātmanaḥ || 6.5

*uddharet*: one must deliver; *ātmanā*: by the mind; *ātmānaṁ*: the conditioned soul; *na*: never; *ātmānaṁ*: the conditioned soul; *avasādayet*: put into degradation; *ātmā*: mind; *eva*: certainly; *hi*: surely; *ātmanaḥ*: of the conditioned soul; *bandhuḥ*: friend; *ātmā*: mind; *eva*: certainly; *ripuḥ*: enemy; *ātmanaḥ*: of the conditioned soul

**6.5 You are your own friend; you are your own enemy. Evolve yourself through the Self and do not degrade yourself.**

~ŸYanĒ\_nĒ\_ZñVñ` `āñĒ\_pñĒ\_Zm{OV: &  
 AZñĒ\_ZñVweĪñdodVŸñĒ\_d eĪñV²&& 6.6

bandhur ātmā 'tmanas tasya yena 'tmai 'vā 'tmanā jitaḥ |  
 anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetā 'tmai 'va śatruvat || 6.6

*bandhuḥ*: friend; *ātmā*: the Self; *ātmanaḥ*: of the living entity; *tasya*: of him; *yena*: by whom; *ātmā*: the Self; *eva*: certainly; *ātmanā*: by the living entity; *jitaḥ*: conquered; *anātmanaḥ*: of one who has failed to control the Self; *tu*: but; *śatrutve*: because of enmity; *varteta*: remains; *ātmā eva*: the very mind; *śatruvat*: as an enemy

**6.6 For him who has conquered the self, the Self is the best of friends; for one who has failed to do so, his self will remain the greatest enemy.**

{OVñĒ\_Z: àemŸVñ` na\_nĒ\_mg\_mŸhV: &  
 erVñUgñ XwĪ fñVñm\_mZm\_mZ`no && 6.7

jitātmanaḥ praśāntasya paramātmā samāhitaḥ |  
 śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu tathā mānāpamānayoḥ || 6.7

*jitātmanaḥ*: of one who has conquered his self; *praśāntasya*: who has attained tranquility; *paramātmā*: Supreme; *samāhitaḥ*: approached completely; *śītoṣṇa*: in cold heat; *sukha*: happiness; *duḥkheṣu*: and distress; *tathā*: also; *māna*: in honor; *apamānayoḥ*: dishonor

6.7 For one who has conquered the self, who has attained tranquility, the Supreme is already reached. Such a person remains in this state in happiness or distress, heat or cold, honor or dishonor.

knZ{dkmZVñE\_mH\$QāWno{d{OVpŋD` : &  
`P\$ BE` Å` Vo` nŋr g\_bñmñ\_H\$ñ#mZ: && 6.8

*jñāna vijñāna tṛptātmā kūṭastho vijitendriyaḥ |  
yukta ityucyate yogī sama loṣṭāśma kāñcanaḥ || 6.8*

*jñāna*: acquired knowledge; *vijñāna*: realized knowledge; *tṛptātmā*: contented self; *kūṭasthaḥ*: established in Self-realization; *vijitendriyaḥ*: one who has subdued his senses; *yukta*: competent for self-realization; *iti*: thus; *ucyate*: is said; *yogī*: one established in yoga; *sama*: equipoised; *loṣṭāśma*: lump of earth, stone; *kāñcanaḥ*: gold

6.8 A person whose mind is contented because of spiritual knowledge, who has subdued his senses and to whom stone and gold are same and who is satisfied with what he is having, is said to be established in Self-realization and is called an enlightened being.

gñöpl`\_İm` RñgrZ`\_Ü` ñWÜö`~ŸYñw&  
gmYñd{n M nmñfwg\_~{Ö{dñeî` Vo&& 6.9

*suhṛn mitrāryudāsīna madhyastha dveṣya bandhuṣu |  
sadhuṣv api ca pāpeṣu samabuddhir viśiṣyate || 6.9*

*suhṛt*: to well-wishers by nature; *mitra*: affectionate benefactors; *ari*: enemies; *udāsīna*: neutral; *madhyastha*: mediators; *dveṣya*: envious; *bandhuṣu*: friends; *sādhuṣu*: pious; *api*: also; *ca*: and; *pāpeṣu*: sinners; *sama*: equal *buddhiḥ*: with equal mind; *viśiṣyate*: is further advanced

6.9 A person is considered truly advanced when he regards honest well-wishers, affectionate benefactors, the neutral, mediators, the envious, friends and enemies, the pious and the sinners all with an equal mind.

Yogī yuñjīta satatam ātmānaṁ rahasi sthitaḥ |  
ekākī yatachittātmā nirāśīr aparigrahaḥ || 6.10

yogī yuñjīta satatam ātmānaṁ rahasi sthitaḥ |  
ekākī yatachittātmā nirāśīr aparigrahaḥ || 6.10

yogī: yogi; yuñjīta: concentrate; satatam: always; ātmānaṁ: himself; rahasi: in a secluded place; sthitaḥ: situated; ekākī: alone; yatachittātmā: careful in mind; nir āśīh: without being attracted by anything else; aparigrahaḥ: free from the feeling of possessiveness

**6.10 A yogi should always try to concentrate his mind on the supreme Self; situated in a secluded place, he should carefully control his mind without being attracted by anything and should be free from the feeling of possessiveness.**

śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthiram āsanam ātmanaḥ |  
nā 'tyucchritaṁ nā 'tinīcam cailājīnakuśottaram || 6.11

śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthiram āsanam ātmanaḥ |  
nā 'tyucchritaṁ nā 'tinīcam cailājīnakuśottaram || 6.11

śucau: in a clean state; deśe: land; pratiṣṭhāpya: placing; sthiram: stable; āsanam: seat; ātmanaḥ: own; na: not; ati: very low; ucchritaṁ: high; nā: not; nīcam: low; caila ajina: of soft cloth and deerskin; kuśa: kusha grass; uttaram: covering

**6.11 On a clean and pure place, one should establish his seat by laying kusha grass, a deer skin and a cloth, one over another, neither too high nor too low.**

tatrai 'kāgram manah kṛtvā yatacittendriyakriyaḥ |  
upaviśyā 'sane yuñjyād yogam ātmaviśuddhaye || 6.12

tatrai 'kāgram manah kṛtvā yatacittendriyakriyaḥ |  
upaviśyā 'sane yuñjyād yogam ātmaviśuddhaye || 6.12

tatra: then; ekāgram: with one focus; manah: mind; kṛtvā: making; yata cittendriya kriyaḥ: by mind senses activities; upaviśya: sitting; āsane: on the seat; yuñjyāt: should execute; yogaṁ: yoga; ātma: oneself; viśuddhaye: to purify

**6.12 Sitting firmly on that pure seat, the yogi should practice the purification of the self by controlling the activities of mind and the senses.**

g\_ſHſn {eandſYma`pMbſprWa: Ÿ  
gâaw` ZnfGHſJſndſ{XeümZdbnſ\$ Z² 6.13

samāṁ kāyaśirogrīvaṁ dhārayann acalāṁ sthiraḥ |  
saṁprekṣya nāsikāgraṁ svaṁ diśaś cā 'navalokayan || 6.13

samāṁ: straight; kāya: body; śiraḥ: head; grīvaṁ: neck; dhārayan: holding; acalāṁ: steady; sthiraḥ: still; saṁprekṣya: looking; nāsika: nose; agraṁ: at the tip; svaṁ: own; diśaḥ: directions; ca: and; anavalokayan: not looking

**6.13 Holding the body, head and neck steady, look at the tip of your nose without looking in any other direction.**

āenſVnĒ\_m{dJV^r~@MnfadVopſWV: Ȱ  
\_Z: gſā` \_ſĴĪmo`Ŵ\$ AngrV \_Ēna: Ȱ 6.14

praśāntātmā vigatabhīr brahmachārivrate sthitaḥ |  
manaḥ saṁyamya maccitto yukta āsīta matparaḥ || 6.14

praśāntātmā: unagitated mind; vigatabhīḥ: free from fear; brahmachārivrate: in the vow of living with Existence; sthitaḥ: situated; manaḥ: mind; saṁyamya: controlling; maccittaḥ: on Me mind; yuktaḥ: balanced; āsīta: sit; matparaḥ: Me supreme goal

**6.14 Sit with an unagitated mind, free from fear and in tune with Existence, controlling the mind, focusing it on Me and make Me the supreme goal.**

`ĀOPdſgXnĒ\_nZſ`mŴr {Z`V\_nZg: Ȱ  
emſV {ZdnŴna\_nſ\_ĒgſWm\_{YJĀNſV Ȱ 6.15

yuñjann evaṁ sadā 'tmānaṁ yogī niyatamānasaḥ |  
śāntiṁ nirvāṇaparamāṁ matsamsthāṁ adhigacchati || 6.15



yadā: when; viniyataṁ: disciplined; cittaṁ: mind; ātmani: situated in the Self; eva: certainly; avatiṣṭhate: situated; niḥspṛhaḥ: free of desire; sarva: all; kāmebhyaḥ: material desires; yuktaḥ: situated; iti: thus; ucyate: said to be; tadā: then

**6.18 When the mind is disciplined and one is situated in the Self, free from all desires, then one is said to be situated in yoga.**

WmXrnm{Zdm/nWnoZd' Vognm\_mñ\_¥m  
`nqJZno`V{MÎññ` `ãOVno`no\_nē\_Z: && 6.19

yathā dīpo nivāstatho ne 'ngate so 'pamā smṛtā |  
yogino yatacittasya yuñjato yogam ātmanaḥ || 6.19

yathā: as; dīpaḥ: lamp; nivāstathaḥ: in a place without wind; na: not; ingate: waver; sā: this; upamā: comparison; smṛtā: is considered; yoginaḥ: of the yogi; yata cittasya: whose mind is controlled; yuñjataḥ: engaged; yogam: in yoga; ātmanaḥ: in the Self

**6.19 As a lamp in a place without wind does not waver, so also the yogi whose mind is controlled remains steady, engaged in yoga, in the Self.**

`Înma\_Vo{MÎññ{Zē\$Ō\$`noḡol`m  
`Î Mpnē\_Znē\_nZ\$ñí`pnē\_{Z Vñ`{V && 6.20

yatro 'paramate cittaṁ niruddhaṁ yogasevayā |  
yatra cai 'vā 'tmanā 'tmānaṁ paśyann ātmani tuṣyati || 6.20

yatra: there; uparamate: quietened; cittaṁ: mind; niruddhaṁ: stop; yoga: yoga; sevayā: work; yatra: there; ca: and; eva: certainly; ātmanā: by the Self; ātmānaṁ: Self; paśyan: see; ātmani: in the Self; tuṣyati: satisfied

**6.20 In yoga, the mind becomes quiet and the Self is satisfied by the Self in the Self.**

gñ \_nĒ` p'VH\$` ĩnK²-ŲŲJmø\_Vrp'Đ` \_²Ų  
dŲĪm` Ĩ Z Mpm̃ \$pñVVÜb{V VĪdV: ॥ 6.29

sukham ātyantikam yat tad buddhigrāhyam atīndriyam |  
vetti yatra na cai 'vā 'yam sthitaś calati tattvataḥ || 6.21

*sukham*: happiness; *ātyantikam*: supreme; *yat*: which; *tad*: that; *buddhi*: intelligence; *grāhyam*: grasped; *atīndriyam*: beyond the senses; *vetti*: know; *yatra*: where; *na*: not; *ca*: and; *eva*: certainly; *ayam*: he; *sthitaḥ*: situated; *calati*: moves; *tattvataḥ*: from truth

**6.21 Supreme bliss is grasped by intelligence transcending the senses. The person who knows this is based in reality.**

` \$bāŲdmMma\$bm^\$\_Ų` VoZñYH\$ VV:  
` pñ\_pŲñVVmZ XwI Ų JñUm{n {dMnĒ` VoŲ 6.22

yam labdhvā cā 'param lābham manyate nā 'dhikam tataḥ |  
yasmin sthito na duḥkhena guruṇā 'pi vicālyate || 6.22

*yam*: that which; *labdhvā*: by attaining; *ca*: and; *aparam*: any other; *lābham*: gain; *manyate*: considers; *na*: not; *adhikam*: more; *tataḥ*: than that; *yasmin*: in which; *sthitaḥ*: situated; *na*: not; *duḥkhena*: by misery; *guruṇā api*: though difficult; *vicālyate*: becomes shaken

**6.22 By attaining that Supreme, one does not consider any other gain as being greater. By being situated in the Supreme, one is not shaken by the greatest of misery.**

V\$ {dŲñK²XwI g\$ nŲ {d` nŲ\$` nŲg\$Kv\_²Ų  
g {Zü` Ų ` nŲ\$` nŲ` nŲm̃ {dŲUMVgm ॥ 6.23

tañ vidyād duḥkhasaṃyogavīyogañ yogasaṃjñitam |  
sa niścayena yuktavyo yogo 'nirviṇṇa cetasā || 6.23

*tañ*: that; *vidyāt*: know; *duḥkha*: misery; *saṃyoga*: contact; *viyogañ*: removal; *yoga*: yoga; *saṃjñitam*: situated; *saḥ*: he; *niścayena*: with determination; *yuktavyaḥ*: practiced; *yogaḥ*: yoga; *anirviṇṇa cetasā*: without deviating

**6.23 When yoga is practiced with determination without deviating, the misery by contact with material senses is removed.**



g' ënä^dmH\$m\_nôE` ŠEdm gdmPefV:  
\_ZgdpfD` Jm\_{d{Z` â` g\_YVV: 6.24

*saṅkalpa prabhavān kāmāṁs tyaktvā sarvān aśeṣataḥ |*  
*manasai 've 'ndriya grāmaṁ viniyamya samantataḥ || 6.24*

*saṅkalpa*: thought; *prabhavān*: born of; *kāmān*: desires; *tyaktvā*: give up; *sarvān*: all; *aśeṣataḥ*: completely; *manasā*: mind; *eva*: certainly; *indriya grāmaṁ*: all senses; *viniyamya*: regulating; *samantataḥ*: from all sides

**6.24 Giving up completely all the fantasies born of the mind, one can regulate all the senses from all the sides by the mind.**

eZ; eZēna\_0^2~ŌçmYVJhrV` m  
AnE\_gpW\$Z: HŠEdmZ {H\$#nK{n {MVV` 6.25

*śanaiḥ-śanair uparamed buddhyā dhṛtigṛhīṭayā |*  
*ātmasaṁsthaṁ manaḥ kṛtvā na kiṁcid api cintayet || 6.25*

*śanaiḥ*: gradually; *śanaiḥ*: step by step; *uparamet*: hold; *buddhyā*: by intelligence; *dhṛti gṛhīṭayā*: held by conviction; *ātma*: Self; *saṁsthaṁ*: established; *manaḥ*: mind; *kṛtvā*: doing; *na*: not; *kiṁcit*: other; *api*: also; *cintayet*: thinking of

**6.25 Gradually, step by step, one should become established in the Self, held by the conviction of intelligence, with the mind not thinking of anything else.**

`Vno`Vno{Züa{V\_Zü#nb\_pñWa\_2  
VVñVVno{Z` â` VXnE\_Y` ol de\$Z` 6.26

*yato-yato niścarati manaś cañcalam asthiram |*  
*tatas-tato niyamyai 'tad ātmany eva vaśaṁ nayet || 6.26*

*yataḥ-yataḥ*: wherever; *niścarati*: becomes agitated; *manaḥ*: mind; *cañcalam*: moving; *asthiram*: not steady; *tataḥ-tataḥ*: there; *niyamya*: control; *etat*: this; *ātmani*: in the Self; *eva*: certainly; *vaśaṁ*: under control; *nayet*: must bring under

**6.26 From wherever the mind becomes agitated due to its wandering and unsteady nature, from there, one must certainly bring it under the control of the Self.**

nenIV\_Zg\$øZ\$`nUJ\$gU \_im\_2V  
CnIV emVaOg\$~^V\_H\$e\_f\_2V 6.27

praśāntamanasaṁ hy enaṁ yoginaṁ sukhaṁ uttamam ।  
upaiti śānta rajasam brahma bhūtam akalmaṣam ॥ 6.27

*praśānta*: peaceful; *manasaṁ*: mind; *hi*: certainly; *enaṁ*: this; *yoginaṁ*: yogi; *sukhaṁ*: happiness; *uttamaṁ*: highest; *upaiti*: attains; *śānta rajasam*: passion pacified; *brahma bhūtam*: liberated by the Supreme; *akalmaṣam*: free from sins

**6.27 The yogi whose mind is peaceful attains the highest happiness; his passion is pacified and he is free from sins as he is liberated by the Supreme.**

`āOPd\$gXnē\_nZ\$`mUr {dJVH\$e\_f: V  
gU Z ~g\$ine\_ē`V\$gU \_iZWV 6.28

yuñjann evaṁ sadā 'tmānaṁ yogī vigata kalmaṣaḥ ।  
sukhena brahma saṁsparśam atyantaṁ sukhaṁ āsnute ॥ 6.28

*yuñjan*: being engaged; *evaṁ*: and; *sadā*: always; *ātmānaṁ*: Self; *yogī*: yogi; *vigata*: free from; *kalmaṣaḥ*: material contamination; *sukhena*: in happiness; *brahma saṁsparśam*: in touch with the Supreme; *atyantaṁ*: highest; *sukhaṁ*: happiness; *āsnute*: attains

**6.28 The yogi always engaged in the Self and free from material contamination, is in touch with the Supreme and attains the highest happiness.**

gd°VnW\_nē\_nZ\$gd°VnZ Mnē\_{Z V  
Bj°Vo`m`P\$ē\_mgd°g\_XeZ: V 6.29

sarvabhūtaṣṭham ātmānaṁ sarvabhūtāni cā 'tmani ।  
ikṣate yogayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanaḥ ॥ 6.29

*sarva*: all; *bhūta*: living beings; *ṣṭham*: situated; *ātmānaṁ*: Supreme; *sarva*: all; *bhūtāni*: living beings; *ca*: and; *ātmani*: in the Supreme; *ikṣate*: sees; *yoga*: yoga; *yuktātmā*: engaged Self; *sarvatra*: everywhere; *sama*: equal; *darśanaḥ*: seeing

**6.29 The yogi sees the Supreme situated in all beings and also all beings situated in the Supreme. One engaged in the Self sees the Supreme everywhere.**

yo māṁ paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati ।  
 tasyā 'haṁ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati ॥ 6.30

yo māṁ paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati ।  
 tasyā 'haṁ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati ॥ 6.30

yaḥ: who; māṁ: Me; paśyati: sees; sarvatra: everywhere; sarvaṁ: everything; ca: and; mayi: in Me; paśyati: sees; tasya: for him; ahaṁ: I; na: not; praṇaśyāmi: lost; saḥ: he; ca: and; me: Me; na: not; praṇaśyati: lost

**6.30 For one who sees Me everywhere and who sees everything in Me, for him I am never lost nor is he lost to Me.**

sarvabhūta sthitaṁ yo māṁ bhajaty ekatvam āsthitaḥ ।  
 sarvathā vartamāno 'pi sa yogī mayi vartate ॥ 6.31

sarvabhūta sthitaṁ yo māṁ bhajaty ekatvam āsthitaḥ ।  
 sarvathā vartamāno 'pi sa yogī mayi vartate ॥ 6.31

sarva: all; bhūta: beings; sthitaṁ: situated; yaḥ: who; māṁ: Me; bhajati: worships; ekatvaṁ: in oneness; āsthitaḥ: situated; sarvathā: in all respects; vartamānaḥ: present; api: though; saḥ: he; yogī: yogi; mayi: in Me; vartate: remains

**6.31 He who is in oneness with Me in all respects, worships Me situated in all beings and remains present in Me.**

ātmaupamyena sarvatra samaṁ paśyati yo 'rjuna ।  
 sukhāṁ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṁ sa yogī paramo mataḥ ॥ 6.32

ātmaupamyena sarvatra samaṁ paśyati yo 'rjuna ।  
 sukhāṁ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṁ sa yogī paramo mataḥ ॥ 6.32

ātmaupamyena: self by comparison; sarvatra: everywhere; samaṁ: equal; paśyati: see; yaḥ: who; arjuna: Oh Arjuna; sukhāṁ: happiness; vā: or; yadi: if; vā: or; duḥkhaṁ: misery; saḥ: such; yogī: yogi; paramaḥ: supreme; mataḥ: opinion

**6.32 One who can feel the happiness or misery of others equally as he can feel his own happiness and misery is the supreme yogi in My opinion, Oh Arjuna.**

---

AOE CdmM  
`nē`\$`nūñĒd`mānēP\$: gmā`z`\_YgyXZ`&  
EVñ`nh\$Z nī`nē`\_M#nbĒdnēñWqV pñWam`²&& 6.33

*arjuna uvāca*

*yo 'yaṁ yogastvayā proktaḥ sāmyena madhusūdana |  
etasyā 'haṁ na paśyāmi cañcalatvāt sthitim sthirām || 6.33*

*arjuna uvāca*: Arjuna said; *yaḥ*: this; *ayaṁ*: system; *yogaḥ*: yoga; *tvayā* : by You; *proktaḥ*: said; *sāmyena*: generally; *madhusūdana*: O killer of Madhu; *etasya*: of this; *ahaṁ*: I; *na*: not; *paśyāmi*: see; *cañcalatvāt*: due to being restless; *sthitim*: situation; *sthirām*: steady

**6.33 Arjuna said: O Madhusudhana, I am not able to see this system of yoga as told by You in the situation of the mind being restless and not steady.**

M#nb\$fh`\_Z: H\$U à\_nWr ~bdXNT>²&  
Vñ`nh\$(ZJh\$`\_Y`odm nēad gññH\$`²&& 6.34

*cañcalaṁ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthī balavad dṛḍham |  
tasyā 'haṁ nigrahaṁ manye vāyor iva suduṣkaram || 6.34*

*cañcalaṁ*: wavering; *hi*: certainly; *manaḥ*: mind; *kṛṣṇa*: O Krishna; *pramāthī* : agitating; *balavat*: strong; *dṛḍham*: firm; *tasya*: is; *ahaṁ*: I; *nigrahaṁ*: controlling; *manye*: think; *vāyoḥ*: of the wind; *iva*: like; *suduṣkaraṁ*: difficult

**6.34 O Krishna, the wavering mind is agitating, strong and firm. I think it is difficult to control the mind like it is difficult to control the wind.**

I r ^JdmZdmM  
Agē`\$`\_hm-nhmo`\_ZmXqZ9h\$Mb`²&  
Aä`ngē`VñH\$`Vò`dññ`U`M`Jb`Vo`&& 6.35

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*

*asaṁśayaṁ mahābāho mano durnigrahaṁ calam |  
abhyāsenā tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca gṛhyate || 6.35*

śrī bhagavān uvāca: the Lord said; asaṁśayaḥ: without doubt; mahābāho: O mighty-armed one; manaḥ: mind; durnigrahaḥ: difficult to control; calaḥ: wavering; abhyāsenā: by practice; tu: but; kaunteya: O son of Kunti; vairāgyeṇa: by detachment; ca: and; grhyate: is controlled

**6.35 The Lord said: O mighty-armed son of Kunti, it is undoubtedly difficult to control the wavering mind but by practice and detachment, it can be controlled.**

Ag\$ VnĒ\_Zm`nolnoXānm B{V\_o\_{V: &  
dī`nĒ\_ZmVw`VWmeŠ`nēdnāy\_mn`V: && 6.36

asaṁyatātmanā yogo duṣprāpa iti me matiḥ ।  
vaśyātmanā tu yatatā śakyo 'vāptum upāyataḥ ॥ 6.36

asaṁyatātmanā: uncontrolled by the mind; yogaḥ: yoga; duṣprāpaḥ: difficult to attain; iti: thus; me: My; matiḥ: opinion; vaśyātmanā: controlled by the mind; tu: but; yatatā: while; śakyaḥ: practical; avāptum: to achieve; upāyataḥ: by appropriate means

**6.36 For one whose mind is uncontrolled, it is difficult to attain yoga in My opinion. But, it is practical to achieve control over the mind by appropriate means.**

AO& CdnM  
A`{V: I Ō`nmV/no`nmf{bV\_mZg: &  
AānB` `nlg\$g(Ō\$H\$gJqV H\$U JĀN\$V && 6.37

arjuna uvāca  
ayatiḥ śraddhaya 'peto yogāccalitamānasaḥ ।  
aprāpya yogasamsiddhiṁ kām gatim kṛṣṇa gacchati ॥ 6.37

arjuna uvāca: Arjuna said; ayatiḥ: the uncontrolled person; śraddhyā: with faith; upetaḥ: engaged; yogāt: from yoga; calita: wavered; mānasaḥ: mind; aprāpya: not getting; yoga: yoga; samsiddhiḥ: achieve; kām: which; gatim: destination; kṛṣṇa: O Krishna; gacchati: achieve

**6.37 Arjuna said: O Krishna, if a person is engaged in yoga with faith but does not attain yoga because of the wavering mind, what destination does he achieve?**

$$A\alpha\{V_{no\_hm-nhno}\{d_T\}_{no} \sim U:n\{W\} \quad 6.38$$

kaccin no 'bhayavibhraṣṭaś chinnābhram iva naśyati |  
apraṭiṣṭho mahābāho vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pathi || 6.38

*kaccit*: whether; *na*: not; *ubhaya*: both; *vibhraṣṭaḥ*: deviated from; *chinna*: torn; *abhraṃ*: cloud; *iva*: like; *naśyati*: perish; *apratiṣṭhaḥ*: without any position; *mahābāho*: O mighty-armed one; *vimūdhah*: confused; *brahmanah*: Supreme; *pathi*: on the path

6.38 O mighty-armed Krishna, does the person who deviated from the path perish, torn like a cloud without any position?

EVY\_ogē`\$HGU Nîm\_hñ efv: &  
EdXÝ` : gē` ñ` nñ` NîmmZ ømnÚVo&& 6.39

etan me samśayaṁ kṛṣṇa chettum arhasy aśeṣataḥ ।  
tvadanyaḥ samśasyā 'sya chettā na hyupapadyate ॥ 6.39

*etat*: this; *me*: My; *samśayaṃ*: doubt; *kṛṣṇa*: O Krishna; *chettum*: dispel; *arhasi*: deserves; *aśeṣataḥ*: completely; *tvat*: than You; *anyaḥ*: without; *samśayasya*: of the doubt; *asya*: of this; *chettā*: remover; *na*: not; *hi*: certainly; *upapadyate*: to be found

6.39 *This is my doubt, O Krishna and I request You to dispel it completely. Certainly, there is no one to be found other than You who can remove this doubt.*

I r ^ JdmZdmM &  
 nmW^Zpb Zm\_ {dZmeñVñ` {dÚVo&  
 Z {h HSc`mUHEHSÜX²XwQ Vm/ JÀN\$V && 6.40

śrī bhagavān uvāca  
pārtha nai 've 'ha nā 'mutra vināśas tasya vidyate ।  
na hi kalyānakrt kaścīd durgatiṁ tāta gacchati ॥ 6.40

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*: the Lord said; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *na*: not; *eva*: thus; *iha*: in this; *na*: not; *amutra*: in the next life; *vināśaḥ*: destruction; *tasya*: his; *vidyate*: exists; *na*: not; *hi*: certainly; *kalyāṇakṛt*: doing activities for the good; *kaścit*: anyone; *durgatim*: degradation; *tāta*: then; *gacchati*: goes

**6.40** *The Lord said: O son of Pritha, the person engaged in activities for good does not meet with destruction either in this world or the next life; he never faces degradation.*

àñ` nñ` H\Wñ\$bnñ\$ñZ(fEdmemeVr: g\_m`&  
eM/rZñ\$ I r\_Vñ\$Jbo`nñ^ññ`^Om`Vo`& 6.41

*prāpya puṇyakṛtām lokān uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ* |  
*śucīnām śrī matām gehe yogabhraṣṭo 'bhijāyate* || 6.41

*prāpya*: after achieving; *puṇyakṛtām*: one who has done virtuous deeds; *lokān*: worlds; *uṣitvā*: after living; *śāśvatīḥ*: many; *samāḥ*: years; *śucīnām*: of the virtuous; *śrī matām*: of the prosperous; *gehe*: in the house; *yoga bhraṣṭaḥ*: one who has fallen from yoga; *abhijāyate*: takes birth

**6.41** *The person who has fallen from yoga after many years of living in the world and doing virtuous deeds takes birth in the house of the virtuous and prosperous.*

AWdm`ññJZm\_d Hñbo^d{V Yr\_Vm\_2`&  
EV{Ö Xlb`Va\$bnñ\$ OY\_`Xrñe\_2`& 6.42

*athavā yoginām eva kule bhavati dhīmatām* |  
*etaddhi durlabhataram loke janma yad īdṛśam* || 6.42

*athavā*: or; *yoginām*: yogi; *eva*: certainly; *kule*: in the family; *bhavati*: becomes; *dhīmatām*: wise; *etat*: this; *hi*: certainly; *durlabhataram*: rare; *loke*: world; *janma*: birth; *yad*: which; *īdṛśam*: like this

**6.42** *Or the yogi certainly takes birth in a family of wise people. Certainly, such a birth is rare in this world.*

Vl V\$~tÖg\$ m\$ b^VonmXñH\$ ²&  
 `VVoM VVno^y : g\$gÖmHieZÝXZ && 6.43

*tatra tañ buddhi sañyogañ labhate paurva dehikam |*  
*yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ sañsiddhau kuru nandana || 6.43*

*tatra*: then; *tañ*: that; *buddhi*: intelligence; *sañyogañ*: united with; *labhate*: gains; *paurva*: previous; *dehikañ*: body; *yatate*: try; *ca*: and; *tataḥ*: then; *bhūyaḥ*: again; *sañsiddhau*: for attaining; *kuru nandana*: O son of Kuru

**6.43 O son of Kuru, on taking such a birth, the person gains the intelligence of the previous body and tries again to attain yoga.**

nphñ mgZ VZp {õ`Voødenefn g: &  
 {Okngw(n `mñ` eāX~«mVdVVo&& 6.44

*pūrvābhyāsenā tenai 'va hriyate hy avaśo 'pi saḥ |*  
*jijñāsur api yogasya śabdabrahmā 'tivartate || 6.44*

*pūrvā*: previous; *abhyāsenā*: by practice; *tena*: by that; *eva*: certainly; *hriyate*: is attracted; *hi*: certainly; *avaśaḥ*: automatically; *api*: also; *saḥ*: he; *jijñāsuḥ*: inquisitive; *api*: also; *yogasya*: about yoga; *śabda brahma*: scriptures; *ativartate*: transcends

**6.44 Due to the practice in his previous life, he certainly gets attracted automatically to yoga and he is inquisitive about yoga and transcends the scriptures.**

à`VñUV\_mZñVw`mñr g\$eÖ{H\$pe~f: &  
 AZñ\$OY\_g\$gÖñVVno`mV nan\$J(V\_²&& 6.45

*prayatnād yatamānaḥ tu yogī sañśuddhakilbiṣaḥ |*  
*aneka janma sañsiddhas tato yāti parām gatim || 6.45*

*prayatnāt*: by trying; *yatamānaḥ*: endeavor; *tu*: and; *yogī*: yogi; *sañśuddha*: cleaned; *kilbiṣaḥ*: sins; *aneka*: many; *janma*: births; *sañsiddhaḥ*: achieved; *tataḥ*: then; *yāti*: achieves; *parām*: highest; *gatim*: state

**6.45 A yogi by trying and practicing, after many births, is cleaned of all sins and achieves the highest state.**



Vnpṛdā`nēYH\$no`nolr kṛZā`nē{n\_VnēYH\$: &  
H\$`&`ÜmYH\$no`nolr Vñ\_nÜnolr ^dnO& & 6.46

tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikaḥ |  
karmibhyaś cā 'dhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavā 'rjuna || 6.46

tapasvibhyaḥ: than the ascetic; adhikaḥ: greater; yogī: yogi; jñānibhyoḥ: than the wise; api: also; mataḥ: opinion; adhikaḥ: greater; karmibhyaḥ: than person who works for the fruit of action; ca: and; adhikaḥ: greater; yogī: yogi; tasmāt: so; yogī: yogi; bhava: become; arjuna: O Arjuna

**6.46 A yogi is greater than the ascetic, than the wise and the person who works for the fruit of the action. So, become a yogi, O Arjuna.**

`nqJZm\_{n gdlfns\_ÖVZnVnē\_Zm&  
I Ömcln^OVö`no\_n\$g\_o`nPSV\_no\_V: & 6.47

yoginām api sarveṣāṁ madgatenā 'ntarātmanā |  
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ || 6.47

yoginām: yogis; api: also; sarveṣāṁ: all kinds of; madgatena: living in Me; antarātmanā: thinking of Me; śraddhāvān: in full faith; bhajate: worship; yaḥ: who; mām: Me; saḥ: he; me: Me; yuktatamaḥ: engaged; mataḥ: opinion

**6.47 Of all yogis, one who always lives in Me, thinking of Me, who worships Me in full faith, he is considered engaged in Me.**

B{V I r\_ØJdØrVmgj{ZfEgw~«-{dÜmì n\$`nolenóo  
I rH\$UnO&g\$lnKoU`mZ`nolnoZm\_fömeÜ`mì : & 2V

iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām  
yogaśāstre śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde dhyāna yogo nāma  
ṣaṣtho 'dhyāyaḥ ||

**In the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad gita, the knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the sixth discourse designated:**

## Dhyāna Yogaḥ

# Appendix

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## Scientific Research on Bhagavad Gita

Several institutions have conducted experiments using scientific and statistically supported techniques to verify the truth behind Bhagavad Gita. Notable amongst them is the work carried out by Maharishi Mahesh yogi, whose findings are published through Maharishi Ved Vigyan Vishwa Vidyapeetam.

Studies conducted using meditation techniques related to truths expressed in the verses of Bhagavad Gita have shown that the quality of life is significantly improved through meditation. These studies have found that meditators experience a greater sense of peace resulting in a reduced tendency towards conflict.

Meditators gain greater respect for and appreciation of others. Their own inner fulfilment increases resulting in improved self-respect and self-reliance, leading to Self Actualization.

One's ability to focus along with brain function integration is enhanced. These have resulted in greater comprehension, creativity, faster response time in decision-making and superior psychomotor coordination.

Stress levels have been shown to decrease with enhanced sensory perception and overall health. The tendency towards depression has been clearly shown to decrease.

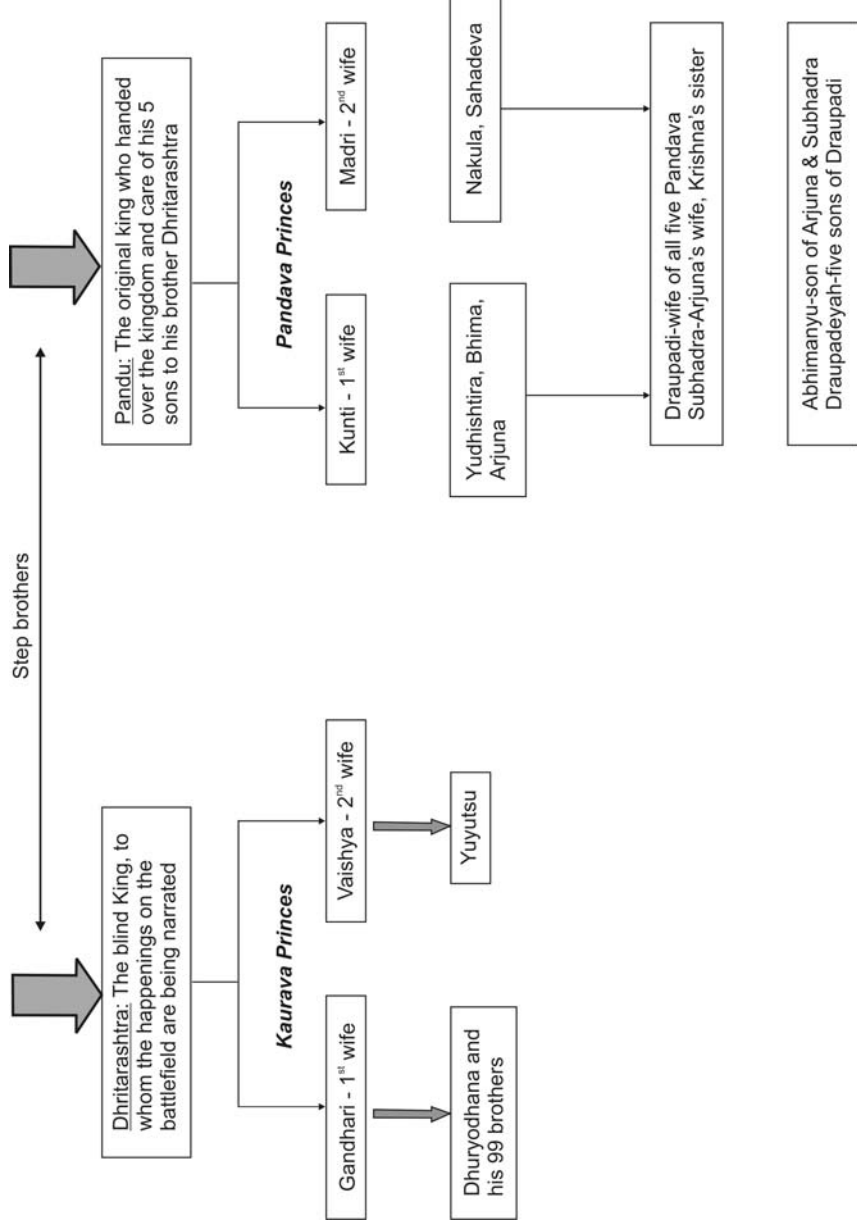
There is enough evidence to show that as a result of meditation, individuals gain a better ethical lifestyle that in turn improves their interaction with others in the community, resulting in less conflict and crime. Group meditation of 7000 people (square root of 1% of world population at the time of the study) was significantly correlated to a reduction in conflict worldwide.

Meditation leads to higher levels of consciousness. Through the research tools of Applied Kinesiology, Dr. David Hawkins (author of the book *Power vs. Force*) and others have shown that human consciousness has risen in the last few decades, crossing a critical milestone for the first time in human history. Dr. Hawkins'

research also documents that Bhagavad Gita is at the very highest level of Truth conveyed to humanity.

We acknowledge with gratitude the work done by the Maharishi Mahesh yogi institutions and Dr. David Hawkins in establishing the truth of this great scripture.

# Kuru Family Tree





## Key Characters in Bhagavad Gita

### **Pandavas' side:**

Krishna	: god Incarnate; related to both Kaurava and Pandava; Arjuna's charioteer in the war
Drupada	: A great warrior and father of Draupadi
Drishtadyumna	: The son of king Drupada
Shikhandi	: A mighty archer and a transsexual person
Virata	: Abhimanyu's father-in-law; king of a neighboring kingdom
Yuyudhana	: Krishna's charioteer and a great warrior
Kashiraj	: King of the neighboring kingdom of Kashi
Chekitan	: A great warrior
Kuntibhoj	: Adoptive father of Kunti, the mother of the first three Pandava princes
Purujit	: Brother of Kuntibhoj
Shaibhya	: Leader of the Shibi tribe
Drishtaketu	: king of Chedis
Uttamouja	: A great warrior

### **Kaurava's Side:**

Sanjay	: Minister and narrator of events to Dritarashtra
Bhishma	: Great grandfather of the Kaurava & Pandava; great warrior
Drona	: A great archer and teacher of both Kauravas and Arjuna

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Vikarna	: Third of the Kaurava brothers
Karna	: Panadavas' half brother, born to Kunti before her marriage
Ashvatthama	: Drona's son and Achilles heel; said to always speak the truth
Kripacharya	: Teacher of martial arts to both Kaurava and Pandava
Shalya	: king of neighboring kingdom and brother of Madri, Nakula and Sahadeva's mother
Soumadatti	: king of Bahikas
Dusshassana	: One of Kaurava brothers; responsible for insulting Draupadi





## Glossary

*Ābharāṇa*: adornment; *vastrābharāṇa* is adornment with clothes

*Abhyāsa*: exercise; practice

*Ācārya*: teacher; literally 'one who walks with'

*Advaita*: concept of non-duality; that individual self and the cosmic SELF are one and the same; as different from the concepts of *dvaita* and *viśiṣṭādvaita*, which consider self and SELF to be mutually exclusive

*Āhāra*: food; also with reference to sensory inputs as in *pratyāhāra*

*Ājñā*: order, command; the third eye energy centre

*Ākāśa*: space, sky; subtlest form of energy of universe

*Amṛta*, *amṛt*: divine nectar whose consumption leads to immortality

*Anāhata*: that which is not created; heart energy centre

*Ānanda*: bliss; very often used to refer to joy, happiness etc.

*Angulimaal*: a Highway robber and murderer who wore a garland with the fingers of his victims. He was later transformed by Buddha and became a monk in Buddha's monastery

*Añjana*: collyrium, black pigment used to paint the eye lashes

*Annamalai Swamigal*: enlightened disciple and personal assistant of enlightened master Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi.

*Āpas*: water

*Ārati*: Worship of the deity using lit lamps

*Ārti*: worshipping with a flame or light, as with a lamp lit with oiled wick, or burning camphor

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*Ashtavakra*: An enlightened sage of ancient India, authored *Ashtavakra Samhita*

*Āśīrvād*: blessing

*Ashtanga Yoga* eight fold path to enlightenment prescribed by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutra*

*Āśraya*: grounded in reality; *aśraya doṣa*, defect related to reality

*Ātma*, *ātman*: individual Self; part of the universal *Brāhman*

*Atma Shatakam*: Poem of six stanzas composed by enlightened master Adi Sankara , summarizing the concept of *Advaita* or nNon-dualistic philosophy

*Aurangzeb*: One of the last Mughal emperorsgreatest of all the Mughal emperors who ruled India; a despotic ruler

*Beedi*: local Indian cigarette

*Bīja*: seed; *bīja-mantra* refers to the single syllable *mantras* used to invoke certain deities,

e.g., *gam* for Ganesha.

*Bhagavān*: literally god; often used for an enlightened Master

*Bhāvana*: visualization

*Brahma*: The God of creation in the Hindu Trinity of *Brahma* (Creator), *Viṣṇu* (Preserver) and *Śiva* (Rejuvenator)

*Bhakti*: devotion; *bhakta*, a devotee

*Bhagavatam*: Devotional stories on Lord Krishna, compiled by Veda Vyasa.

*Big Bang*: One of the cosmological models of the Universe; proposed by Georges Lemaitre, a Roman Catholic priest

*Brahma*: the Creator; one of the Hindu trinity of supreme gods, the other two being *Vishnu* and *Shiva*

*Brahmacāri*: literally one who moves with the true reality, *Brāhman*, one without fantasies, but usually taken to mean a celibate; *brahmacarya* is the quality or state of being a *brahmacāri*

*Brāhman*: ultimate reality of the Divine, universal intelligent energy

*Brāhmaṇa*: person belonging to the class engaged in *Vedic* studies, priestly class

*Buddhi*: mind, intelligence; mind is also called by other names, *manas*, *citta* etc.

*Buddhu*: a fool

*Buddha*: Enlightened master who preached of the 'eight fold path' to achieve 'nirvana' or salvation.

*Cakra*: literally a 'wheel'; refers to energy centres in the mind-body system

*Cakṣu*: eye, intelligent power behind senses

*Candāla*: an untouchable; usually one who skins animals.

*Chandana*: sandalwood

*Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*: An enlightened sage from West Bengal, believed to be an incarnation of Lord Krishna  
*Chitrakṛpā*: a character in the Hindu mythology who keeps account of the events in one's life to reveal at the time of person's death.

*Citta*: mind; also *manas*, *buddhi*.

*Dakṣiṇāyana*: Sun's southward movement starting 21<sup>st</sup> June

*Darśan*: vision; usually referred to seeing divinity

*Dharma*: righteousness

*Dhee*: wisdom.

*Dīkṣa*: grace bestowed by the Master and the energy transferred by the Master to the disciple at initiation or any other time, may be through a *mantra*, a touch, a glance or even a thought

*Doṣa*: defect

*Dhyāna*: meditation

*Dr. Brian Weiss*: a Psychotherapist, famous for his book, 'Many Lives, Many Masters.'

*Dṛṣṭi*: sight, seeing with mental eye

*Gada*: weapon similar to a mace; also *gadadhāyudha*

*Gāṇḍīva*: Divine bow presented to Arjuna by Agni, god of Fire, in the epic Mahabharata

*Gopī*, *gopikās*: literally a cowherdess; usually referred to the devotees who played with Krishna, and were lost in Him

*Gopura*, *gopuram*: temple tower

*Govindapada*: Adi Sankara's Master of enlightened master Adi Sankara

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*Gṛhastā*: a householder, a married person; coming from the word *griha*, meaning house

*Guṇa*: the three human behavioral characteristics or predispositions; *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*

*Guru*: Master; literally one who leads from *gu* (darkness) to *ru* (light)

*Gurukul*, *Gurukulam*: literally ‘tradition of *guru*’, refers to the ancient education system in which children were handed over to a *guru* at a very young age by parents for upbringing and education

*Hammurabhi*: Ancient king of Mesopotamia, known for his Hammurabhi’s code, one of the first written books on codes of law

*Homa*: ritual to *Agni*, the god of fire; metaphorically represents the transfer of energy from the energy of *Ākāśa* (space), through *Vāyu* (Air), *Agni* (Fire), *Āpas* (Water), and *Prthvī* (Earth) to humans. Also *yāga*, *yagna*

*Icchā*: desire

*I Ching*: one of the oldest of Chinese classical texts, describes Cosmology and philosophy

*Idā*: along with *pingala* and *suṣūmna*, the virtual energy pathway through which *pranic* energy flows

*Itihāsa*: legend, epic, mythological stories; also *purāṇa*

*Jāti*: birth; *jāti-doṣa*, defect related to birth

*Jāgrata*: wakefulness

*Japa*: literally ‘muttering’; continuous repetition of the name of divinity

*Jīvasamādhi*: burial place of an enlightened Master, where his spirit lives on

*jīva*: means living

*Jyotiṣa*: Astrology; *jyotiṣi* is an astrologer

*Kaivalya*: liberation; same as *mokṣa*, *nirvāṇa*

*Kāla*: time; also *mahākāla*

*Kalpa*: vast period of time; *Yuga* is a fraction of *Kalpa*

*Kalpanā*: imagination

*Karma*: spiritual law of cause and effect, driven by *vāsana* and *samskāra*

*King Janaka*: a Noble and benevolent king who ruled Mithila;, father of princess Sita in the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*.

*Koan*: Zen parables, an anecdote or riddle without any solution to show the inadequacy of logical reasoning

*Kośa*: energy layer surrounding body; there are 5 such layers. These are: *annamaya* or body, *prāṇamaya* or breath, *manomaya* or thoughts, *vignānamaya* or sleep and *ānandamaya* or bliss *kośas*

*Kriyā*: action

*Kṣaṇa*: moment in time; refers to time between two thoughts

*Kṣatriya*: caste or *varṇa* of warriors

*Kumbh Mela*: Large spiritual gathering in India that occurs four times every twelve years, attracting millions of people. The four locations of Kumbh Mela are Prayag in Allahabad at the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the underground Saraswati river; Haridwar on the banks of Ganga; Ujjain along the Kshipra river and Nasik along Godavari.

*Kusha grass*: Sacred grass used in the Vedic tradition for various religious ceremonies. The seat made of kusha grass and covered with a skin and a cloth is considered ideal for meditation.

*Kuṇḍalini*: energy that resides at the root chakra ‘*mūlādhārā*’

*Lao Tzu*: Enlightened master and father of Taoism ancient Chinese philosopher, referred as ‘One of the Three Pure Ones.’

*Mahā*: great; as in *mahaṛṣi*, great sage; *mahāvākya*, great scriptural saying

*Mālā*: a garland, a necklace; *rudrākṣamālā* is a garland made of the seeds of the *rudrākṣa* tree

*Mālā*: Garland

*Manana*: thinking, meditation

*Manas*: mind; also *buddhi*, *citta*

*Mandir*: temple

*Maṅgala*: auspicious; *maṅgala sūtra*, literally auspicious thread, the yellow or gold thread or necklace a married Hindu woman wears

*Mantra*: a sound, a formula; sometimes a word or a set of words, which because of

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their inherent sounds, have energizing properties. *Mantras* are used as sacred chants to worship the Divine; *mantra*, *tantra* and *yantra* are approaches in spiritual evolution

*Manickkavasagchakar*: One of the main Nayanmars or Tamil Saivite poet. He compiled 'Thiruivasagam', a collection of hymns in praise of Lord Shiva.

*Māyā*: that which is not, not reality, illusion; all life is *māyā* according to *advaita*

*Mimamsa*: a system of ancient Indian philosophy

*Mokṣa*: liberation; same as *nirvāṇa*, *samādhi*, *turīya* etc.

*Mūlādhāra*: the first energy centre, *moola* is root; *ādhāra* is foundation, here existence

*Nachiketa*: Lead character in Kathopanishad, believed to have learnt the secret of death from Lord Yama (god of death) himself.

*Nadi*: river

*Nāḍi*: nerve; also an energy pathway that is not physical

*Nāga*: a snake; a *nāga-sādhu* is an ascetic belonging to a group that wears no clothes

*Namaskār*: traditional greeting with raised hands, with palms brought together

*Nānta*: without end

*Nārī*: woman

*Nataraja*: a Depiction of Lord Śiva as the cosmic dancer, main deity in the famous temple at Chidambaram

*Nididhyāsana*: what is expressed

*Nimitta*: reason; *nimitta-doṣa*, defect based on reason

*Nirvāṇa*: liberation; same as *mokṣa*, *samādhi*

*Nisargadatta Maharaj*: An enlightened master who lived in Mumbai. Passed away on 8th September 1981, at the age of 84.

*Niyama*: the second of eight paths of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga; refers to a number of day-to-day rules of observance for a spiritual path

*Pāpa*: sin

*Paramahansa Yogananda*: an Enlightened master, advocated practice of Kriya Yoga to attain Self-realization.

*Patanjali*: Father of Yoga, famous for his treatise on yoga called Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

*Prakashananda Saraswati*: a Rasik saint in the tradition of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, his teachings are mainly based on the Bhagavad Gita.

*Phala*: fruit; *phalasruti* refers to the assumed benefits of worship

*Paramahamsa*: literally the 'supreme swan'; refers to an enlightened being

*Parikrama*: the ritual of going around a holy location, such as a hill or water spot

*Parivrājaka*: wandering by an ascetic monk

*Piṅgala*: please see *idā*

*Prāṇa*: life energy; also refers to breath; *prāṇāyāma* is control of breath

*Pratyāhāra*: literally 'staying away from food'; in this case refers to control of all senses as part of the eight fold Ashtanga Yoga

*Pr̥thvī*: earth energy

*Purohit*: priest

*Pūjā* (pronounced *pooja*): normally any worship, but often refers to a ritualistic worship

*Pūjā*: Form of ritual worship

*Puṇya*: merit, beneficence

*Purāṇa*: epics and mythological stories such as *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa* etc.

*Pūrṇa*: literally 'complete'; refers in the *advaita* context to reality

*Rajas*, *rajasic*: the second characteristic of the three human *guṇa* or behaviour modes, referring to passionate action

*Putra*: son; *putrī*: daughter

*Rakta*: blood

*Rāmāyaṇa*: Famous Indian epic, authored by *Valmiki*

*Rātrī*: night

*Ramkarishna Paramahamsa*: An Enlightenend master from Dakshineswar, West Bengal, India.

*Ramana Maharshi*: an enlightened master from Tiruvannamalai; composed 'Aksharamanamalai', the famous hymn on Arunachala hill

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*Ravana*: Mighty emperor of Lanka, the villain in *Ramayana*, who abducted princess Sita in the Indian historical epic *Ramayana*.

*Rene Descartes*: French philosopher and mathematician, Father of Modern philosophy

*Rṣi*: a sage

*Sādhana*: practice, usually a spiritual practice

*Sādhu*: literally a 'good person'; refers to an ascetic; same as *sanyāsi*

*Sahasra nāma* 1000 names invoking a particular deity which devotees recite

*Sahasrāra*: lotus with thousand petals; the crown energy centre

*Śakti*: energy; intelligent energy; *Parāśakti* refers to universal energy, divinity; considered feminine; masculine aspect of Shakti is Shiva

*Samādhi*: state of no-mind, no-thoughts; literally, becoming one's original state; liberated, enlightened state.

*Samśaya*: doubt

*Samskāra*: embedded memories of unfulfilled desires stored in the subconscious that drive one into decisions, into *karmic* action

*Samyama*: complete concentration

*Sankalpa*: decision

*Sāṅkhya philosophy*: One of the six schools of classical a system of orthodox Indian philosophy. *Sāṅkhya* philosophy regards the universe as consisting of two realities: *puruṣa* (self) and *prakṛti* (matter).

*Sanyās*: giving up worldly life; *sanyāsi* or *sanyāsin*, a monk, an ascetic

*Sanyāsinī*, refers to a female monk

*Śāstra*: sacred texts

*Satva, satvic*: the highest *guṇa* of spiritual calmness

*Siddhi*: extraordinary powers attained through spiritual practice

*Shankara*: an enlightened master from Kalady, Kerala. Exponent of *Advaita vedānta*

*Shishya*: disciple

*Simha*: lion; *Simha svapna*: nightmare

*Śiva*: rejuvenator in the trinity; often spelt as *Siva*. *Śiva* also means 'causeless auspiciousness'.



*Smarāṇa*: remembrance; constantly remembering the Divine

*Smṛti*: literally 'that which is remembered'; refers to later day Hindu works which are rules, regulations, laws and epics, such as Manu's works, *Purāṇas* etc.

*Śraddhā*: trust, faith, belief, confidence

*Śravaṇa*: hearing

*Sṛṣṭi*: creation, which is created

*Śruti*: literally 'that which is heard'; refers to the ancient scriptures of *Vedās*, *Upaniṣads* and Bhagavad Gita; considered to be revealed scriptures

*Stotras*: devotional verses, to be recited or sung

*Śūdra*: caste or *varṇa* of manual labourers

*Sumerian civilization*: an ancient civilization that existed in the Mesopotamia till the 2nd millennium BC

*Sūtra*: literally 'thread'; refers to epigrams, short verses which impart spiritual techniques

*Śūnya*: literally zero; however, Buddha uses this word to mean reality

*Suṣuṃna*: Please see 'ida'

*Svādiṣṭhāna*: where Self is established; the groin or spleen energy centre

*Svapna*: dream

*Svatantra*: free

*Tamas*, *tamasic*: the *guṇa* of laziness or inaction

*Tantra*: esoteric techniques used in spiritual evolution

*Tapas*: severe spiritual endeavour, penance

*Thatagata*: Buddhahood, a pali word

*Tīrtha*: water; *tīrtham* is a holy river and a pilgrimage centre

*Trikāla*: all three time zones, past, present and future; *trikālajñāni* is one who can see all three at the same time; an enlightened being is beyond time and space

*Turīya*: state of *samādhi*, no-mind

*Upaniṣad*: literally 'sitting with an enlightenend master'

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*Uttarāyaṇa*: Sun's northward movement

*Vaiśya*: caste or *varṇa* of tradesmen

*Valmiki*: author of the famous epic, *Rāmāyaṇa*.

*Vānaprastha*: the third stage in one's life, (the first stage being that of a student, and the second that of householder) when a householder, man or woman, gives up worldly activities and focuses on spiritual goals

*Varṇa*: literally colour; refers to the caste grouping in the traditional Hindu social system; originally based on aptitude, and later corrupted to privilege of birth

*Vāsana*: the subtle essence of memories and desires, *saṁskāra*, that get carried forward from birth to birth

*Vastra*: clothes

*Vastrābharāṇa*: removal of clothes, often used to refer to Draupadi's predicament in the Mahabharata, when she was attempted to be disrobed.

*Vāyu*: Air

*Veda*: literally knowledge; refers to ancient Hindu scriptures, believed to have been received by enlightened *ṛṣi* at the being level; also called *śruti*, along with *Upaniṣad*

*Vibhūti* : sacred ash worn by many Hindus on forehead; said to remind themselves of the transient nature of life; of glories too

*Vidhi*: literally law, natural law; interpreted as fate or destiny

*Vidyā*: knowledge, education

*Viśāda*: depression, dilemma etc.

*Viṣṇu*: The Preserver in the trinity; His incarnations include Krishna, Rama etc. in ten incarnations; also means 'all encompassing'

*Viśvarūpa*: universal form

*Vivekananda*: An enlightened monk from West Bengal, India; was also Ramakrishna Paramahansa's leading disciple

*Yama*: discipline as well as death; One of the eight fold paths prescribed in Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga; refers to spiritual regulations of *satya* (truth), *ahiṁsā* (non violence), *aparigraha* (living simply); *asteya* (not coveting others' properties) and *brahmacarya* (giving up fantasies); *yama* is also the name of the Hindu god of justice and death

*Yantra*: literally 'tool'; usually a mystical and powerful graphic diagram, such as the

*Śrīcakra*, inscribed on a copper plate, and sanctified in a ritual blessed by a divine presence or an enlightened Master

*Yoga*: literally union, union of the individual self and the divine SELF; often taken to mean *Haṭha yoga*, which is one of the components of *yogasana*, relating to specific body postures

*Yuga*: a period of time as defined in Hindu scriptures; there are four *yugas*: *satya*, *tretā*, *dvāpara* and *kali*, the present being *kali yuga*.

*Zarathustra*: founder of the religion of Zoroastrianism followed by Parsis



## Appendix

### About Paramahansa Nithyananda

**Paramahansa Nithyananda** is an enlightened master living amidst us today. With a worldwide movement for meditation and inner bliss, Nithyananda offers solutions for situations as practical as every day stress to the quest for something as profound as enlightenment.

Nithyananda left home at a young age and traveled the length and breadth of India, visiting holy shrines, associating with several yogis and mystics during this period. He realized his intrinsic knowledge through the paths of meditation, yoga, knowledge, devotion, Tantra and other Eastern metaphysical sciences. With an enlightened insight into the core of human nature, Nithyananda has defined his mission for humanity at large.

Rooted in the *vedic* tradition and embracing all world religions as paths to the ultimate Truth, Nithyananda draws people from around the globe, crossing all societal, cultural, language, age and gender barriers.

Since its inception, **Nithyananda Dhyanapectam** in Bidadi, Bengaluru, India has been a spiritual center for devotees from all over the world. The organization renders innumerable services and programs. **The worldwide ashrams and centers** offer programs in Quantum Spirituality, where material and spiritual worlds merge to create blissful living.

The services provided by the organization include ■ meditation ■ yoga ■ corporate leadership programs ■ free energy healing through the *Nithya Spiritual Healing system* ■ free education to youth ■ promoting art and culture ■ *satsangs* (spiritual gatherings) ■ free medical camps and eye surgeries ■ free meals at all ashrams worldwide ■ a holistic system of education for children through the ashram *gurukul* ■ a one-year residential spiritual training program in India and more. The **Life**



**Bliss Foundation**, located in Los Angeles, USA spreads the powerful teachings and meditations cognized by Nithyananda to centers in North America, Europe and other parts of the world.

Nithyananda says, “Enlightenment flowers when individual consciousness disappears into Universal Consciousness. When you start living enlightenment, you automatically raise the human consciousness around you. Living enlightenment holds the key to global peace and inner bliss. Every individual should be a pioneer in the transition of human consciousness to Divine Consciousness.”

## **Programs and Workshops**

Nithyananda Mission offers specialized meditation programs worldwide, to benefit millions of people at the levels of body, mind and spirit. A few of them are listed below:

### **Inner Awakening**

An enlightenment intensive program for sincere seekers offering yoga, powerful teachings, meditation, initiation and more. This program is an intense experience to prepare the body-mind system to hold and radiate the experience of ‘living enlightenment’.

### **Life Bliss Engineering**

Life Bliss Engineering program is an intense 3-month program with Nithyananda in the energy field of the Bengaluru ashram. It aims at awakening every participant to Living Enlightenment. It trains them to imbibe a vedic mind and a yogic body. It offers:

- Long-hour sessions in the presence of the master
- Powerful talks from the master
- Eye opening Question and Answer sessions directly with the master
- Specially designed meditation techniques in the presence of the master
- A vedic lifestyle with hands-on exposure to vedic culture and arts
- Short trips with the master to powerful temples of India and much more...

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## Life Bliss Program Level 1 (LBP Level 1)

- *Energize yourself*

A *chakra* based meditation program that relaxes and energizes the seven major *chakras* or subtle energy centers in your system. It gives clear intellectual and experiential understanding of your various emotions such as greed, fear, worry, attention-need, stress, jealousy, ego, and discontentment. It is designed to create a spiritual effect at the physical level. It is a guaranteed life solution to experience the reality of your own bliss. When you are liberated from a particular emotion, you experience a new world, a new energy. It is a highly effective workshop, experienced by millions of people around the globe.



## Life Bliss Program Level 2 (LBP Level 2)

- *Death demystified!*

A meditation program that unleashes the art of living by demystifying the process of dying. This program creates the space to detach from ingrained and unconscious emotions like guilt, pleasure and pain, all of which stem from the ultimate fear of death. It is a gateway to a new life that is driven by natural intelligence and spontaneous enthusiasm

## Life Bliss Program Level 3 - Atma Spurana Program (LBP Level 3 - ATSP)

- *Connect with your Self!*

An indepth program that analyzes clearly the workings of the mind and shows you experientially how to be the master of the mind rather than be dictated by it. It imparts tremendous intellectual understanding coupled with powerful meditations to produce instant clarity and integration.

## Life Bliss Program Level 3 - Bhakti Spurana Program (LBP Level 3 - BSP)

- *Integrate your Devotion*

A program that reveals the different dimensions of relating with others and with your deeper self. It clearly defines relationship as that which kindles and reveals your own unknown dimensions to you. It allows you to experience the real depth and joy of any relationship in your life.

## Life Bliss Technology (LBT)

- *A free residential life sciences program*

Life Bliss Technology (LBT) is a residential program for youth between 18 and 30 years of age. With its roots in the Eastern system of *vedic* education, this program is designed to empower modern youth with good physical, mental and emotional health and practical life skills. By nurturing creative intelligence and spontaneity, and imparting life skills, it creates economically self-sufficient and spiritually fulfilled youth. Above all, it offers a lifetime opportunity to live and learn under the tutelage of an enlightened master.



## Nithyanandam

An advanced meditation program for seekers where the presence of the Master and the intense energy field lead one to the state of *nithya ananda* – eternal bliss. It offers a range of techniques from meditation to service to sitting in the powerful presence of the master.

## Kalpataru

An experiential meditation program sowing in you the seed of:

*Shakti*, the Energy to understand and change whatever you need to change in life,

*Buddhi*, the Intelligence to understand and accept whatever you don't need to change in life,

*Yukti*, the Clarity to understand and realize that however much you change, whatever you see as reality is itself a continuously changing dream,

*Bhakti*, the Devotion, the feeling of deep connection to That which is unchanging, eternal and Ultimate, and

*Mukti*, the Ultimate Liberation into Living Enlightenment when all these four are integrated.

This program empowers you with the energy to align your actions with your intentions so you move with success and inner bliss.

## Nithyananda Mission Highlights

- **Meditation and de-addiction camps worldwide:** Over 2 million people impacted to date

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- **Nithya Spiritual Healing:** A system of cosmic energy healing administered free through 5000 ordained healers, through our worldwide ashrams and centers, touching 20,000 people globally every day – healing both mind and body
  - **Anna Daan (free food program):** 10,000 nutritious meals distributed every week through all the ashram *anna mandirs* for visitors, devotees and disciples thus improving health standards
  - **The Nithyananda Order and its training:** Spiritual aspirants ordained as *Sannyasis*, *Brahmacharis* and *Brahmacharinis*: who undergo years of intensive training in yoga, meditation, deep spiritual practice, Sanskrit, *vedic* chanting, life skills, and who run the 100% volunteer based ashrams of Nithyananda Mission worldwide, working in all Mission activities
  - **Nithya Yoga:** A revolutionary system of yoga in the lines of sage Patanjali's original teachings, taught worldwide.
  - **Nithyananda Vedic Temples and Ashrams:** Over 30 Vedic temples and ashrams worldwide.
  - **Meditation Programs in prisons:** Conducted in prisons and juvenile camps to reform extremist attitudes – resulting in amazing transformation among the inmates.
  - **Medical Camps:** Free treatment and therapies in allopathy, homeopathy, ayurveda, acupuncture, eye check-ups, eye surgeries, artificial limb donation camps, gynecology and more
  - **Support to children in rural areas:** School buildings, school uniforms and educational materials provided free to rural schools.
  - **Life Bliss Technology:** A free two year / three month program for youth teaching Life Engineering and the science of enlightenment
  - **Nithyananda Gurukul:** A modern scientific approach to education combined with the *vedic* system of learning – protecting and developing the innate intelligence of the child who flowers without repression, fear or peer pressure
  - **Corporate Meditation Programs:** Specially designed and conducted in corporate firms





worldwide including Microsoft, AT&T, Qualcomm, JP Morgan, Petrobras, Pepsi, Oracle, American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) – with focus on intuitive management, leadership skills and team work.

- **Nithyananda Institute of Teachers' Training:** Over 300 teachers trained to teach: transformational meditation programs, Quantum Memory Program, Nithya Yoga, Health and Healing Programs, Spiritual Practice Programs and more
- **Media:** Articles in national and international newspapers and magazines, carrying transforming messages from Nithyananda
- **Nithyananda Publishers:** Over 5000 hours of Paramahansa Nithyananda's discourses transcribed, edited and published in-house and made available in stores through books, DVDs and CDs
- **Life Bliss Galleries:** Worldwide stores and mobile shops retailing recordings and books of Nithyananda's discourses and Nithya Kirtan recordings in 23 languages
- **Nithyananda Meditation & Healing Centers:** Worldwide, offering meditation and healing services
- **Nithyananda Sangeeth Academy:** Music, dance and other forms of art taught and encouraged in youth and elderly alike - live and through internet
- **Free Discourses on YouTube:** Over 500 free discourses on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) – wisdom from the Master, easily accessible. Ranked top in viewership
- **Support to scientists and researchers:** Continually bridging gaps between science and spirituality through researches on spiritual energy and healing.
- **Nithyananda Youth Foundation:** A collection of inspired youth, building a divine and dynamic society with a common ideology of peace and enlightenment
- **Nithya Dheera Seva Sena:** Through transformation of self, this volunteer force of *Ananda Sevaks* trains and functions in the service of humanity, also serving as relief wing working towards disaster recovery management.

## Contact Us

Listed below are some of the main centers of Nithyananda Mission.

### USA:

#### Los Angeles

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*Sacred Banyan tree at the ashram in Bangalore*

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For further information visit [www.nithyananda.org](http://www.nithyananda.org)

## Nithyananda Galleria

A wide range of products for blissful living:

- Nithyananda's insightful messages on video, audio tapes, CDs and books in over 26 languages.
- Enlivening music and chants for meditation and inner healing.
- Meditation and yoga books, kits and CDs for rejuvenating body, mind and spirit.



- 
- Energized rosaries, bracelets, photographs, clothing and gift items for a stimulating life style.
  - Ethnic energy bead jewelry for men and women for tranquility and continued high energy.

Visit [www.nithyanandagalleria.com](http://www.nithyanandagalleria.com) or [www.lifeblissgalleria.com](http://www.lifeblissgalleria.com) for more information.  
E-mail: [nithyanandagalleria@gmail.com](mailto:nithyanandagalleria@gmail.com) & [shop@lifebliss.org](mailto:shop@lifebliss.org)

## **Suggested for Further Reading**

- Living Enlightenment (Gospel of Paramahansa Nithyananda)
- Nithyananda Vol. 1
- Guaranteed Solutions
- Don't Worry Be Happy
- Instant Tools for Blissful Living
- You Can Heal
- Follow Me In!
- The Door to Enlightenment
- Songs of Eternity (A coffee table book with Nithyananda's messages and pictures)
- You are No Sinner
- So You Want to Know The Truth?
- Uncommon answers to Common Questions

Over 500 FREE discourses of Nithyananda available at <http://www.youtube.com/lifeblissfoundation>

**VOL 1**

**CHAPTERS 1 - 6**

# BhagavadGita

demystified

by

**NITHYANANDA**

*The* Gita demystified in the language of here and now by an enlightened master of this millennium.

The Bhagavad Gita is Lord Krishna's gift to the world given several thousand years ago. In these three volumes, Paramahansa Nithyananda, enlightened master of this millennium, demystifies the Gita in the language of here and now. He explains it relevant to the modern man. He shows how it can lead to blissful living in today's world. He assures the sincere seeker, the Supreme Experience, described by Krishna.

